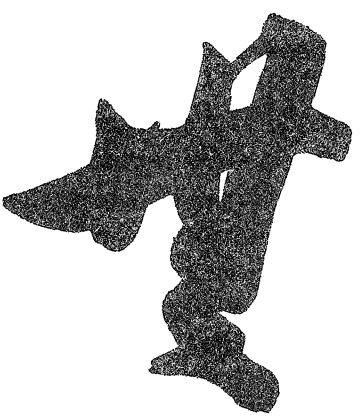
The Structure of Oriental Philosophy:

Collected Papers of the Eranos Conference

Volume II

Toshihiko Izutsu



Keio University Press

THE IZUTSU LIBRARY SERIES
ON ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY 4

VOLUME II

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Publication of this book was assisted by a grant from the Foundation for the Publication of the Izutsu Library Series, Keio University, Japan.

Published by Keio University Press Inc.
19-30, 2-chome, Mita, Minato-ku
Tokyo 108-8346, Japan
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Printed in Japan

ISBN 978-4-7664-1431-8 (cloth)
ISBN 978-4-7664-1541-4 (paper)

First edition, 2008

THE IZUTSU LIBRARY SERIES ON ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Foreword to the Series

Within Oriental thought, original sources alone are so numerous as to approach the number of stars in the sky. Merely to translate these sources, even in a long-range project, would result in nothing more than a display of only those stars visible to our eyes. The Izutsu Library Series on Oriental Philosophy is intended as a collection of writings seeking to provide a guide to this constellation of Oriental thought, as well as to inherit and develop, philosophically, the dynamism of that thought.

"Oriental thought," or "Oriental philosophy," does not yet exist as a structured unity. It is an area of research in which the conceptual issues are only now beginning to appear. Our reflections are directed towards developing a framework for this area of thought. In the Orient, as is well known, many important philosophies have originated and developed since ancient times. And considerable research has been devoted to tracing the historical connections among the various traditions of thought. However, little attempt has been made to grasp the differing philosophical streams as an organically whole semantic system. In this regard, "Oriental thought" cannot be compared to its "Occidental" counterpart. The latter stands as a unity, or could be construed as a unitary form, structured on the dual semantic foundations of Hellenism and Hebraism. However, "Oriental thought" does not yet have such a form. This lack presents one of the great philosophical issues confronting the Orient at this moment.

We may safely assert that, in general, the emergence of any

systematic thought will coincide with, and be characterized by, the formation of a specific network of key concepts. And the various views of thought that evolved in the variegated traditions of the Orient are no exception. Thus, to induce a functional field of semantics, each of the specific and independent networks of key concepts contained in the traditional key texts of the Orient can be brought together, mutually correlated, integrated, and assimilated into a flexible, detailed, yet all-inclusive and closely interwoven mosaic of conceptual texture, that is to say, a semantic field as an organic and dynamic whole.

With this new semantic field in mind, the Izutsu Library Series on Oriental Philosophy intends to deal, freely and widely, with the deeper levels of traditional Oriental thought, seeking to contribute to the future and to the existential present, rather than merely to preserve the past.

Each addition to the series will be published as a translation into a Western language, with the expectation that the translation itself will naturally and necessarily open up a "space," or a functional field of semantics, in which the Orient encounters the Occident, and the traditional the existential present. We hope that this series, as a long-term project, will contribute to the development of thought in the twenty-first century and provide a conceptual "space" to construct an Oriental thought capable of supporting the pluralistic and multilayered cultural paradigm that is demanded by the coming age.

THE EDITORS

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NAIVE REALISM AND CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY

ERANOS 44
(1975)

I

The subject-matter of the paper which I am going to present now is "Naive Realism and Confucian Philosophy." The main problem is whether or not Confucian ontology or the Confucian view of the external world represents the position of what is known today among philosophers as naive realism. If so, in what sense and to what extent? If not, again, in what sense and to what extent? This is a pertinent question because the position taken by the Sung-dynasty Confucian philosophers on the problem of the reality of the external world looks at first glance very close to naive realism, and because, as a matter of fact, it does share with naive realism a number of important characteristics.

Naive realism — also called natural realism — reduced to its simplest form, may be said to be a philosophical position which holds that things really *are* as they are perceived by us. We simply open our eyes, and immediately a variegated world appears before our eyes with all its colors and shapes. And that world which thus spreads itself out before and around us is a reality, that is to say, the world as it really is. Presented thus in an unsophisticated form, it will be clear that naive realism is the most natural world-view of the man in the street based

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The theme of Eranos 44 (1975), that is, the 44th Eranos Conference Yearbook, which is the compilation of lectures given at the Eranos Conference in 1975, was "Die Vielheit der Welten — The Variety of Worlds — La pluralité des mondes."

on the common-sense notion about perception.

A basic assumption underlies this world-view;[1] namely, that under normal conditions we directly perceive by our sense organs things and their qualities in the external world, that they are "public" objects — "public" in the sense of their being capable to be observed simultaneously by several persons at one time without any essential difference — i.e., that they are not private to the percipient subject in the way that dream-objects are, and that besides being external to us, they are physically enduring. This would mean that they are physical or material things and their physical or material qualities which all continue to exist exactly as they look to us even when there is no one there to see them. This last statement, namely that all physical objects exist in a public world external to us with their sensible qualities, quite independently of our sense-experiences, and that our perception of them consists simply in producing the mental copies of them represents an idea which is characteristic of the epistemology of naive realism generally known as the copy-theory of cognition.

Despite its being a very "healthy" view of the external world as long as we stand on the plane of our average, day-to-day thinking, naive realism will prove vulnerable and liable to be easily criticized as too "naive" a view of things as soon as it is interpreted as the copy-theory of cognition. Naive realism in this particular aspect asserts without reserve that cognition is the mental act of copying objective reality and that our view of the world is nothing other than a reflection of an order of things existing independently of our minds. The world, according to this view, is composed of enduring substances with enduring qualities, and it is reflected in our consciousness as in a mirror.

No critically minded philosopher would take such a position today. Naive realism is very important and valuable in a negative sense, that is, as a target of criticism which, by allowing itself to be

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[1]See R. J. Hirst (ed.): *Perception and the External World*, New York: Macmillan, 1965, pp. 1–2.

criticized, lets each thinker or each school determine his or its philosophical position. In fact almost all philosophers in the West in modern times may be said to have been given a chance for clarifying their own philosophical position by clarifying the way in which they thought they succeeded in overcoming the defects of naive realism interpreted as the copy-theory of cognition. Kant is a classical example. Contemporary philosophers have their own method of overcoming naive realism, a method based on modern science, as is best illustrated by the works of the British empiricists.

In the light of the ever-changing microscopic and macroscopic images of the physical structure of the world in modern science, naive realism is criticized first of all as being a prescientific or antiscientific standpoint. The discoveries about optical illusion, hallucination and the relativity of perception inescapably force us to admit that in perceiving "things" we are not directly aware of the physical objects as they really are. Perception depends on the make-up of the perceiving apparatus. Perception varies in accordance with the structuralization that is imposed upon it by our sense organs, which again function differently according to different physical conditions under which they happen to be activated. Thus, according to some empiricist philosophers, as a matter of primary and immediate awareness, there is, there can be, no publicly given external world, no objective reality to be directly observed beyond the realm of private and transitory sense-data.

I shall leave at this point Western philosophy and turn to the East. I have discussed some aspects of contemporary empiricism in the West just in order to show the philosophical importance of naive realism not so much in itself as in terms of the various critical attitudes one can take against it. In fact, naive realism, being as it is simply a theorization of our unreflective, day-to-day experience of the world, might in itself look philosophically too naive or trivial to be taken seriously. That it is not so has, I think, been already shown. The problem or problems raised by naive realism, far from being trivial, are

pregnant with grave consequences. And this holds true also in Eastern philosophies. Implicitly or explicitly, naive realism has in the East always been considered something of central importance in philosophy. It has been considered important because it raises a serious problem concerning the reality of the empirical world.

It need hardly be pointed out that for the Easterners in general the most serious of all philosophical problems has been that of ultimate reality. What is the ultimately real, if there be such a thing, as distinguished from the relatively real or the absolutely unreal? That has always been the most formidable philosophical problem which most of the outstanding thinkers in the East have grappled with. And this, let us note, is the problem which is raised precisely by naive realism. For its basic assertion may be presented as a metaphysical statement to the effect that the empirical world, i.e., the physical world as we experience it in our everyday life through the activity of our sense organs *is* the ultimate reality.

Is the world of our ordinary experience ultimately real? As one of the most persistent metaphysical questions for the thinking mind, this question has served throughout the long history of Oriental philosophy as the starting-point for the formation of the majority of philosophical schools and systems. And the interesting thing is that here, too, as in the West, most of the philosophers or philosophical schools have tried to solve the problem by suggesting a particular way in which one could overcome naive realism. It will not be going too far to say that the differences among the major philosophical traditions in the East can be best clarified in terms of the various ways they have proposed for overcoming the position of naive realism.

In contemporary Western philosophy — and here I am thinking particularly of the scientific or semi-scientific (if not pseudo-scientific) standpoint of empiricism — those who criticize naive realism usually take their stand against it within the confines of empirical experience itself, and do not think of going beyond this domain, for to do so would, in their eyes, simply be taking an unscientific or

antiscientific attitude. In other words, both the naive realists and their critics discuss their problems, as it were, on one and the same plane of empirical thinking. The majority of the Western philosophers try to overcome the defects involved in naive realism, and thereby determine their own position, on the basis of the conviction that the plane of consciousness on which perception, sensation and thinking normally function is the only plane of consciousness to be taken seriously.

Of course, analytical psychology or depth psychology has recently come up with the idea that the human psyche, instead of being a single layer structure, is composed of, or analyzable into, a number of strata ranging from the daylight consciousness to the ever darker regions of the subconscious or unconscious. This would seem to suggest the possibility of overcoming naive realism in terms of a stratum or strata of consciousness different from that on which our ordinary experience of the world takes place. In the strictly academic field of philosophy, however, the possibility of accomplishing such a work, to the best of my knowledge, still remains a theoretical possibility.

The situation in the East is conspicuously different from this. The major schools of Oriental philosophy start by positing a multilayer structure of consciousness. The primary assumption for them is that there are a number of strata differing in depth from each other to be distinguished in the mind. And in such a perspective, our ordinary experience of the physical world through sensation, perception and rational thinking belongs only to the surface level of consciousness, all the rest of the strata remaining unknown and undisclosed unless our mind be subjected to a special, systematic training.

It must be borne in mind that the problems raised by naive realism are considered in Oriental philosophies no less of a serious nature than in the West. But their approach to the same problem is quite different. The Oriental philosopher fully agrees with his Western colleague that naive realism is nothing but a philosophized form of the typical world-view of the plain man, a result of the intellectual

reflection exercised by the plain man upon his own ordinary experience of the external world. But the Oriental philosopher will immediately make the following additional remark: the semi-scientific critique of perception as developed in Western philosophy stands on that very level of thinking as that on which naive realism asserts itself. In his view, a plain man is here criticizing another plain man, no matter how sophisticated his criticism may be. In other words, both the original thesis of naive realism and its antithesis remain in the same dimension of thinking peculiar to the man in the street.

For the Oriental philosopher, on the contrary, the reality so-called of the world as experienced by the plain man must be judged to be either truly real or unreal by a totally different standard. He asserts that the position of naive realism must be critically examined from the standpoint of one who has definitely transcended the thinking dimension of the plain man. Naive realism, he holds, can properly be criticized only by one who, having gone through a rigorous spiritual discipline, has cultivated a different dimension of consciousness, who has his "inner eye" opened up in himself. The major schools of Oriental philosophy, whether Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, or Islamic theosophy, all agree on this point. Confucian philosophy, too, is no exception to this.

In order to further elucidate this point, let us go back to our original formulation of the most fundamental metaphysical question suggested by naive realism. The question, as we saw above, is this. Is the world of everyday experience fundamentally real? To this question Oriental philosophy in the past has given three different answers.

(1) The first answer is an outright No, an answer with an unhesitating negative. I mention this one as the first answer for no other reason than its being usually considered most typical and characteristic of the Oriental mind. This attitude is pre-eminently represented by Buddhism and Taoism. Put in an extremely simplified form, this is an assertion that the world as we experience it in our everyday life is wholly devoid of reality. The so-called external world is nothing but

a floating fabric of illusions; it is a sheer appearance, a nightmare of consciousness. Buddhism and Taoism do not seem to become weary of repeating that living in this world as we do and perceiving things as we do, we are simply in a dream like the famous Butterfly in the *Book of Chuang-tzŭ*. Firmly convinced that we are wide awake, we are just dreaming a dream, a dream of a world consisting of solid and stable things whereas in truth there is no substantial solidity to be attributed to anything whatsoever.

(2) The second is a conditional (or somewhat mitigated) No. Strictly speaking this kind of negation will amount to neither-No-nor-Yes. This is best represented by the position taken by the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara (ca. 700–ca. 750 A.D.).

The world-view of Śaṅkara is generally known as the theory of Māyā (*māyā-vāda*). He holds that the world as we ordinarily experience it is nothing but Māyā. The word *māyā* is usually translated "illusion" in the sense of sheer hallucination, seeing something where there is nothing. This understanding of the word has often led to a serious misunderstanding of Śaṅkara's philosophical position: namely, that it is an illusionism holding that the world is but a Cosmic Illusion. In fact, the word *māyā* in ordinary Sanskrit does often mean not only illusion but even deceit, trick, sorcery or witchcraft. But this meaning does not strictly apply to the philosophical context of Śaṅkara.

Śaṅkara does not say that perception is illusory and that the external world as we perceive it through our senses is but an illusion. Quite the contrary; he says the perceptual experience *is* a mode of perceiving reality, and, to that extent, the empirical world is real. But, he adds, sense perception is not the absolute mode of perceiving reality, and consequently, the empirical world is *not* real in the sense of being not the absolute and ultimate Reality itself.

(3) The third answer to the same question is a straightforward Yes. This is the position taken by Confucian philosophy. As we have already seen, Taoism and Buddhism take the position of an outright No, and Advaita Vedānta that of neither-No-nor-Yes or, we might

as well say, both-Yes-and-No. In contrast to these three schools of Oriental philosophy, Confucianism answers the question with an unhesitating affirmative. The world as we ordinarily experience it *is* real. The things which we perceive through our sense organs are really out there, in the external world, as solid, stable, physical things. By our noetic experience of the physical world, we are experiencing reality as reality; we are not dreaming a dream, let alone having an illusion or hallucination. There is not even the question of misperceiving the reality. Confucian philosophers know of no such thing as Māyā intervening between the perceiving subject and the object perceived.

With this fundamental attitude with regard to the problem of the reality or unreality of the external world, Confucian philosophy comes, it would appear, closest to naive realism. This is our provisional conclusion.

II

Let us now examine in more detail the main contentions of Taoism, Buddhism and Vedānta concerning the problem of reality and unreality of the empirical world so that, by contrast, the Confucian position might better be brought to light, I shall first explain the Taoist position on this problem.[2]

For this purpose I shall begin by analyzing a symbolic story which is found in the *Book of Lieh-tzŭ*,[3] which, to my mind, best reveals the very special nature of the Taoist critique of naive realism. The story is a fairly long one. I shall give it here in a somewhat simplified form.

A man goes into a forest to gather wood for fuel. Quite by chance he kills a deer — a fine game for a hunter. Overjoyed with the

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[2]See my *Sufism and Taoism,* vol. II, Tokyo, 1967, pp. 48–70, and my Eranos lecture "The Absolute and the Perfect Man in Taoism," *Eranos 36–1967*, pp. 411–420. [Editor's note: See volume I, pp. 41–53.]

[3]*Lieh-tzŭ*, III, 9.

unexpected game, he hides it in a place, carefully covering it up with grass. On his way home, however, he forgets where he has hidden it so that he finally comes to believe that it was nothing but a dream. He goes home murmuring to himself how he saw himself in a dream having caught and hidden the deer. (Note that a dream-factor has already started creeping into the experience of "reality.")

While he is still on the way, another man overhears the words which the first man is murmuring to himself. Following the indication given by these words, this second man finds the exact spot, obtains the deer, and comes home with the game on his back. He says to his wife: "I happened to see a man who had dreamt of having obtained a deer but who had completely forgotten where he had hidden it in his dream. Tracing up the clue given by his words I did find the deer. Here it is. Judging by the fact that the deer here is a real object, the dream which that man saw must have been a veridical dream."

His wife says: "No, on the contrary. It was you who dreamt. You saw in a veridical dream a man who had obtained the deer. That man existed only in your dream." (Note that here stand two opinions opposed to each other as to which part of the event is real and which unreal. However, both parties agree on the external reality of the deer. In the second half of the story, the reality of the deer itself becomes dubious.)

The first man, on the other hand, who has lost his deer, comes home. Sad and depressed, he goes to bed. During the night he sees a dream. In that dream he discovers the exact spot where in his first dream (as he thinks) he hid the deer. He sees also how the second man finds the exact place and obtains the deer. At sunrise as he wakes up, he carefully examines his own dream, and by its clue ends up by catching the second man. He raises a lawsuit against him.

The judge examines the case and finally comes to the following conclusion. Nobody can be sure as to which part of the event is reality and which part a dream. Since, however, we actually see with our own eyes this deer here, at least it must be recognized as a reality. Let

us, then, solve the problem by cutting this real deer into two halves.

This judgment was reported to the king of the country. The king apparently was a Taoist sage. Upon hearing the judgment words he exclaimed. "Ah, what a thing! The judge does not seem to know that the entire event is a dream. The ignorant judge is thus going to cut the unreal deer into two unreal halves, without knowing that this cutting of the deer itself is going to take place in a dream."

Thus comes the story to an end. What exactly is the philosophical implication of this story? For a Taoist philosopher the story can philosophically be interpreted only in one definite way. The story purports to show that there is no clear-cut line of demarcation between dreaming and waking. It does not usually occur to a dreaming man, up to the very moment of awaking, that the things he is actually experiencing in the dream may be but a phantasmagoria. In the light of this fact it may well be doubted if the external world which one usually believes to be real is *really* real. It is sheer arbitrariness to take the waking world as *the* reality. Both the waking world and the dream world may very well be equally unreal. Or conversely it may be that the dream world has as good a claim to being real as the waking world.

To this extent the Taoist philosopher seems to agree completely with Descartes who uses exactly the same argument to prove that there is no assurance that our waking experience is more real than our dream experience.[4] How can we be sure, Descartes asks himself, that the things we see in the waking world are more real than those we see in the dream world, seeing that the mental experience we have in dreaming is no less alive and clear than the experience we have while we are awake? From this observation he comes to the significant conclusion that there are absolutely no definite indices by which we could distinguish the waking state from the dreaming.

[4] *Meditations*, I and *Discours de la méthode*, IV.

(*Dum cogito attentius, tam plane video nunquam certis indicis vigilam a somno posse distingui.*)

It is remarkable, however, that the Taoist philosopher and Descartes differ from one another in giving each a completely different interpretation to this same state of affairs. In order to save the "reality" of the physical world as we experience it in the waking state, Descartes brings in the notion of an omnipotent, just and benevolent God. The external world cannot be a sheer dream because there is God whose nature must be such that it ensures the reality of the things we perceive.

The Taoist takes an entirely different course. He feels, to begin with, no need of being assured of the physical reality of the world. The absence of distinction between dream and reality, that is to say, that nothing is solidly fixed and stable, that every thing has but a blurred contour, and that consequently the whole world of Being is, in short, in a state of an ontological fluidity in which all things freely interpenetrate each other in such a way that they tend to merge into a final undifferentiation — this precisely *is* the "reality" as understood by the Taoist. The reality seen in this way is what Chuang-tzŭ calls the Chaos (*hun tun*), a fused whole where all demarcations are abolished. And to become able to see things in this way is what he calls Great Awakening.

The Great Awakening, thus, consists in our seeing reality as essentially dreamlike or, let us say, a dream — paradoxical though it may sound. And the Taoist sage is precisely one who is able to see things in such a dreamlike state.[5] It need hardly be said that by taking this position, Taoism is diametrically opposed to naive realism. It is opposed in this respect also to Confucianism, as we shall see presently.

[5]For more details about this point see the above-mentioned Eranos lecture on Taoism, pp. 398–411 (*supra*, note 2). [Editor's note: See volume I, pp. 24–40.]

III

Turning now to Buddhism we encounter at the very outset the same basic proposition concerning the nature of the empirical world which we found in Taoism: namely, that the world as we experience it through sensation and perception is as unreal as a dream-vision or a phantom. The Buddhist Sūtras repeat to satiety that the world is but a dream. The so-called external world is an illusory appearance. Living as we do in this world, we are simply living in the pursuit of illusions, we exist in an unreal flux of appearances. Nothing is endowed with permanence. Whatever appeals to our senses, is by nature dreamlike, ready to melt away the moment it comes into existence. As is well known, this negative attitude toward existence has in Japan historically led to a pessimistic view of the world accompanied by a keen tragic sense of existence, particularly of human existence.

But this is a popular Buddhism. In its philosophical aspect, Buddhism develops quite a different idea, although it does start basically from the same observation of the things as they exist — or more strictly we must say, as they seem to exist — in the empirical world. And significantly enough, here again it assumes the form of a criticism of naive realism.

Discarding all the differences in detail that are observable among various schools, we might say that the philosophy of Mahāyāna Buddhism stands on the basis of the negation of *svabhāva* "self-being," the permanently fixed, objective identity of a thing. Everything in this respect is compared to a reflected image, a mirrored form. A flower reflected in a mirror is (or *looks*) undeniably a flower. But it lacks substantiality. It is roughly in such a sense that all things in the world are said to have no *svabhāva*.

Vasubandhu (ca. 400–ca. 480 A.D.),[6] one of the greatest philosophers of the Yogācāra school, explains the matter in the following

[6] *Triṃśikā-vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi*, XX.

way. Suppose we perceive a black pot. We naturally tend to believe that it exists in the external world as an objective reality as suggested by the word "pot," and the blackness of the pot as an objective, real quality inherent in the pot corresponding to the adjective, "black." However, it does not need much thinking for us to realize that the so-called "same pot," i.e., a pot as an enduring substance, does not remain the "same" even for two consecutive moments. It changes its color and luster moment by moment, no matter how imperceptibly slight the change might be. And the color and form of the pot look differently in accordance with the different angles from which we see it. Moreover, the black pot I am perceiving now is of course different from the blue pot which I perceived yesterday.

Up to this point the Buddhist critique of naive realism would seem to agree with contemporary Western empiricism. It is from here on that a remarkable difference appears between the two positions. It is clear, the Buddhist philosopher goes on to argue, that the black pot which I am now perceiving is not a metaphysical entity remaining identical to itself. It has no objective, permanent *svabhāva*; it has only a transitory and illusory identity. The pot at every moment is but a fleeting image conjured up out of the depths of consciousness. The sensory organ, my eye, with which I see the pot is also a fleeting image having no objective identity of its own. As the pot changes from instant to instant, the eye changes from instant to instant. Thus at every moment two fleeting images, one of the pot and the other of the eye, come into a momentary relation with each other. And the successive occurrence of the momentary relations between the two fleeting images produces the phenomenon of the perception of a pot. The whole perceptible world is of such a nature. All the so-called external things are like that. If they are said to exist, they exist as the water in a mirage. They exist in the sense in which an elephant or a horse magically conjured up by a sorcerer out of a piece of wood is said to exist.

The problem, then, is: Where do these fleeting images come from? They come up, Vasubandhu says, out of the depths of the psyche, the dark region of the subconscious which he calls *ālaya-vijñāna*, the

"storehouse consciousness." The Storehouse Consciousness is a mysterious region of the psyche which preserves, in the form of fluid and confused images, all the mental and bodily actions of men. It becomes activated only in the mind of each individual man, but, in itself, it goes beyond the boundaries of an individual mind. It is conceived as a kind of collective psyche, a universal depository of all individual experiences. No act of man, whether mental or physical, disappears without leaving behind it an imperceptible trace. The traces go on being accumulated in the Storehouse Consciousness. Thus each one of us has in the depths of the subconscious a depository of the individual and collective predispositions formed by the actions mental and bodily, of men in the past going back to a beginningless past, and it will go on conditioning our future actions and propensities, thereby enriching interminably the Storehouse Consciousness. This is no other than what is called in Buddhism *karma.*

Thus understood, the outline of the Buddhist critique of perception will be clear. Perception is not due to stimuli coming from the external world and provoking and activating our sense organs. For, to begin with, there is no such thing as the external world as an objective reality. Nor are there such things as sense organs as objective realities. Both are but provisional and transitory figurations which emerge out of the indistinct mass of the dark, primordial images deposited in the subconscious, and which assume clear and well-delineated forms as they come out to the surface of the daylight consciousness.

It is in this sense that Buddhism is diametrically opposed to naive realism. It is also in this sense that the proposition that the world of our ordinary experience is but a dream is properly to be understood in Buddhism on the philosophical level of thinking as distinguished from the understanding of the same proposition on the level of popular Buddhism. Confucianism wages a fierce, all-out fight against this Buddhist thesis on both these levels of understanding. But before embarking upon the discussion of the Confucianist position, I would briefly examine Vedānta which remarkably resembles Buddhism in

some respects but which in an important sense comes a step closer to Confucianism.

IV

By Vedānta I understand here the Advaita Vedānta or Non-Dualist school of Vedānta represented by Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara does not agree with Taoism when it asserts that there is no clear-cut line of demarcation between the waking world and the dream world, that all things exist as a confused and indistinct mass (the Chaos) in which they, having no definite essential boundaries separating one from another, get interfused with each other so that in the end they lose themselves in an undifferentiated primordial unity. For a Taoist philosopher, the intuition of this state of the ontological fluidity of things is the very first step taken toward the intuition of Reality as it really is, that is, as the unconditioned, undifferentiated oneness of Being. The ontological fluidity here spoken of is a state in which one is not sure which part of one's actual experience is a dream and which part belongs to the waking world.

Śaṅkara takes a definite stand against such a thesis. In his view, there *is* a clear-cut distinction between the dreaming experience and the waking. They constitute two different levels of reality. A dreaming man is in a certain state. When he wakes up he is immediately transposed into an entirely different state, subjectively as well as objectively.

Nor does Śaṅkara agree with Buddhism when the latter asserts that the whole world of our empirical experience, the so-called external world, is as baseless as a dream or illusion. Śaṅkara does not simply dispose of our waking world as something baseless, a baseless vision which our mind projects into the void.

According to him, the world of our waking experience is not wholly baseless. That is to say that the empirical world is not unreal; it *is* real, except that it is not ultimately or absolutely real. As we shall see in more detail, our waking experience is not unreal insofar as it

is an experience of Brahman, the ultimate Reality. But our waking experience is not ultimately real either, because it is not an immediate intuition of Brahman.

The physical world as we perceive it through our senses is definitely real, because, Śaṅkara says, in perceiving it in this way we are perceiving nothing other than Brahman, although in this perception Brahman appears in gross deformation. It belongs to the basic tenets of Śaṅkara's philosophy that we cannot experience something where there is absolutely nothing. As long as we do have the empirical experience of external things, we cannot maintain their non-existence.

There are, Śaṅkara admits, perceptions of undoubtedly illusory nature, a mirage, for instance. A coil of rope in the dark is sometimes seen as a snake. The snake-appearance of the rope is an illusion. But it is not a sheer illusion, a pure creation of our psyche. For the actual perception of the snake is made possible by the real existence of the rope as its substratum. The really existent rope is in this case simply misperceived as a snake.[7]

The perception of a snake in place of the rope is, surely an extremely incomplete and deformed apprehension of the rope, but representation of the snake in this experience is not entirely devoid of an objective basis, because it does have an extra-mental, objective counterpart in the really existent thing, the rope.

Śaṅkara, thus, takes a stand against Buddhism in its critique of perception, particularly the position taken by the thinkers of the Yogācāra School which we have examined above. The latter, as we have seen, asserts the unreality of the external objects of perception. It reduces all objects of perception to the quivering or throbbing of consciousness (*vijñāna-spandita*). Both the perceiving subject and the perceived object are illusory appearances produced by the vibration of the mind. The world in this sense exists only in the mind of man. Against this view, Śaṅkara holds that all noetic experience consists in a real contact with an external object. The waking world is different from

[7] *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya*, II, 2, 28, (tr. George Thibaut, 1., Delhi, 1968) p. 421.

the dream world in that the former is based on a real experience, an experience of the reality.

Is Advaita Vedānta, then, epistemologically and ontologically naive realism? The answer is No. For according to Śaṅkara, the world of our empirical experience is real only insofar as we remain on the level of empirical experience. But there is another level of experience, another level of consciousness, called the *pāramārthika* level ("absolute" or "transcendental" level) whose presence is revealed to us when we are in a state of *samādhi*, the state of the most highly concentrated meditation. And from the viewpoint of this second level of experience, the empirical world turns out to be unreal, losing its phenomenal reality, which it possesses on the level of ordinary waking experience. It is in the light of this experience that the external world is pronounced to be a world of Māyā.

In order to clarify this point, let us go back to the example of the coil of rope mistakenly perceived as a snake. The rope lying in a dark place is mistaken for a snake. But as soon as the place is lightened, the snake disappears and the rope discloses itself in its true form. What about the "reality" of the rope itself, then? Is it real? Yes, Śaṅkara says, it is real on the level of sensory cognition. On a higher level of cognition, however, the rope itself must disappear from our vision, just as the snake-image has been dissipated by the appearance of the rope in an authentic perceptual experience. Otherwise expressed, from the point of view of the higher mode of cognition, the rope discloses itself as a misperception of the Absolute. This higher mode of cognition is the Brahman-experience in which Brahman is revealed in its absolutely unconditioned nature and in which there no longer remains anything perceivable. Then the whole empirical world disappears with all its swarming diversity of things, animate and inanimate, into a primordial metaphysical oneness where there is nothing to be perceived as a finite existent, be it a rope or anything whatsoever. Brahman for Śaṅkara is the Undifferentiated. And that precisely is Reality.

What is of supreme importance from the Vedāntic point of view is

for us to observe that this disappearance of the empirical world in the Brahman-experience is not the dissolution of the world into nothingness just as the melting away of butter when it is brought into contact with fire.[8] The world can never be reduced to nothingness because it is a mode of being or a mode of appearance of Brahman itself. In perceiving the empirical world we are actually having an unbroken series of cognitions of Brahman.[9] So what is really annihilated by the Brahman-experience is not the world; it is rather the *avidyā* "nescience" or "ignorance" on our part that is annihilated.

The *avidyā*, "nescience" is a noetic form peculiar to our relative and relational consciousness. Brahman which in itself is absolutely undifferentiated is necessarily presented to this type of consciousness in multifarious differentiation. When a man whose eye is affected by double vision, Śaṅkara says,[10] sees the moon in the sky, naturally and necessarily he sees there more than one moon. But this does not mean that the moon has actually become more than one. That which is essentially One never *becomes* Many, it only *appears* as Many. It appears so to our relative and relational consciousness whose nature it is to "superimpose" (*adhyāsa*) delimitations and determinations upon what is absolutely undetermined and undifferentiated. As a result we have what we call the empirical or physical world which Śaṅkara regards as the world of Māyā. The word *māyā* in this context is synonymous with *avidyā* "nescience." As is easy to see, the so-called external world is nothing but Brahman as it *appears* to us through *avidyā* or *māyā*.

But the physical world, it is important to note, is not to be taken as something "other" than Brahman. The world is nothing but Brahman seen or experienced *as* the world. As such, the sensory experience of the physical world is not an experience of mere fancies, illusory visions. It is but a relative experience of Brahman.

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[8] *Ibid.*, III, 2, 21.
[9] Śaṅkara: *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇī*, 521.
[10] *Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya* (*op. cit*), II, 1, 27.

There is, according to Śaṅkara, something, an invisible force we might say, which naturally makes our ordinary experience of Reality relative and conditioned, and which does not allow us to experience Reality as Reality but only as the physical world. This force which is both cosmic and mental, is *māyā*. In modern terminology the *māyā* may best be understood as a subconscious force interminably producing images and forms. The working of the *māyā*, however, is also conditioned by the physiological structure of our sense organs. The sense-data or the percepts which we directly perceive on the empirical level of experience are thus, under such an interpretation of Śaṅkara's philosophical position, images of Brahman as reflected in our *māyā*-ridden consciousness. But no matter how different and removed from Reality these images may be, there is always Brahman underlying them as the one invariable substratum (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of appearances. All sensible appearances we experience are appearances of Brahman. The sensible world is "real" in this sense.

V

We are now in a position to consider Confucianism in a somewhat wider perspective of comparative philosophy. In what follows I shall try to elucidate the fundamental attitude taken by the Confucianists toward naive realism by comparing their ideas with those of the Taoists, Buddhists and Vedāntists. Let us first take up Vedānta. It goes without saying that Vedānta occupies a special place in our comparative perspective because no mention is actually made of Vedānta in the Confucian literature. Vedānta was simply unknown to the Confucian circle of the Sung dynasty whereas Taoism and Buddhism had gained by that time great popularity among the intellectuals.

As we have seen above, the reality of the physical things, for Śaṅkara, is an undeniable fact. Against the Yogācāra school of Buddhism which accounts for our empirical experience of the world in terms of images and subjective visions arising out of the depth-consciousness called Storehouse-Consciousness, Śaṅkara maintains the real,

objective existence of external things such as a post, wall or pot. The whole external world which is composed of things of this nature is in this sense real. To this extent Vedānta agrees with naive realism.

But it radically differs from naive realism in that it posits behind the physical world the ultimately-Real, Brahman, thereby degrading the reality of the physical world to a relative one. The physical world and the things existing therein are not simply non-existent like sheer illusions. For, as we have already observed, they are all phenomenal appearances of Brahman, the ultimately-Real. They are real insofar as they are appearances *of* Brahman, but they are unreal insofar as they are but *appearances* of Brahman, not Brahman as it really is.

This idea of Brahman, appearing to the limited vision of our empirical consciousness as the world of multiplicity and diversity, brings to light the subtle resemblance as well as difference between Vedānta and Confucianism. We must recall at this point that Confucian metaphysics posits something which occupies in its own system the central position somewhat similar to Brahman in Vedānta: namely, Tao, the Way. Tao as we find it in the system of the *I Ching* is the metaphysical center of the universe. It is the ultimate ground from which everything originates and to which everything returns. Behind each of the divergent things we perceive in the physical world there always is Tao in a relative, determined form. Each single thing in the sensible world is a particular articulation of Tao itself.

There is, however, a subtle but fundamental difference between Tao and Brahman in this respect. In the view of Vedānta, Brahman is the ultimate Reality which is eternally one and immutable. Brahman only *appears* to our finite consciousness as diversified into many different things. Under the infinite diversity of appearances Brahman always remains changeless, unmoved and unaffected. Through the mysterious power of Māyā corresponding to the "magical" power of articulation on our part, Brahman goes on producing the appearance of the physical world. Note that it is not a process of ontological evolvement of Brahman. It is not the case that Brahman produces the appearance of the world by transforming itself into

various things. To use the technical terminology of Indian philosophy, the physical world is not a result of *pariṇāma* ("ontological modification") of Brahman. The world-process is not a transformation-process of Brahman. It is rather a process of *vivarta* ("changing appearance") of Brahman.

In reference to this point, Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara is known as *vivarta-vāda*, the thesis of the world being a changing appearance of Brahman. From the same point of view we might call Confucianist metaphysics *pariṇāma-vāda*,[11] the thesis of the world being ontological modifications of the Absolute.

In Confucianism, in fact, there is no question of Tao appearing to our empirical consciousness as Many. Instead of being immutable and remaining eternally the same, like Brahman, Tao never ceases to change. Moment by moment it changes. At every moment it is something entirely new. This is the *i*, the Change, the unique subject matter of the "Book of Change." The physical world which spreads itself out before our eyes in all its colors and forms is the necessary result of the incessant transformation of Tao. Not that the One *appears* as many to our finite consciousness. The One really *becomes* the Many. What is involved is not simply an epistemic transformation of Tao; it is its actual, ontological transformation.

Thus a comparison with Vedānta has brought to light an extremely important feature of Confucian philosophy relating to the basic problem of the present paper. Holding as it does that the world of our ordinary experience is a direct result of the ceaseless change or transformation of Tao itself, it takes the position that the empirical world is fundamentally real. Confucianism is in this sense a very robust realism which brings it very close to naive realism.

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[11]Within the boundaries of Indian philosophy, the Sāṃkhya School characteristically maintains the position of *pariṇāma-vāda*. On the opposition of *pariṇāma* and *vivarta* as understood by Śaṅkara, see the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, 1.

VI

If, in regard to the problem of reality or unreality of the world of our ordinary experience, Confucianism is a robust realism in the sense I have just explained, it will be quite natural that it should strongly oppose Taoism and Buddhism. "Of all the heretical doctrines," Ch'êng Ming Tao[12] remarks, "Buddhism and Taoism have a number of merits and are close to Confucianism. And because they are close to Confucianism, they are more dangerous and misleading than all the rest of heresies." Particularly dangerous in this respect was Buddhism if only for the reason that the Zen school of Mahāyāna Buddhism was fast spreading among the intellectuals as a fashion dominating some of the best minds of that time. The Ch'êng brothers used to admonish their disciples saying "Ward off Buddhism just as you should abstain from sensual pleasures aroused by erotic songs and coquettish women. Beware of Buddhism unconditionally, without the slightest reserve. Otherwise you would be almost by force dragged into the abyss of its false teachings."[13]

Buddhism places exclusive emphasis on the realization of pure subjectivity, thereby completely ignoring the existence of the things and events that go to constitute an objective world standing opposed to the subject. Self-realization is of course important from the point of view of Confucianism. Otherwise the spiritual discipline of "quiet sitting" would simply be meaningless. But Confucianism holds that we must at the same time recognize that the subject at every instant of its existence is actually encountered by an objective order of things which is not at the free disposal of the subject, which opposes the subject as something independent of it and which, more

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[12]Ch'êng Ming Tao (1032–1085), one of the leading figures in the Confucianist movement in the Sung dynasty. Ming Tao and his younger brother I Ch'uan (1033–1107), known both together as the Ch'êng brothers, were the immediate predecessors of Chu-tzŭ (1130–1200) who brought Confucian philosophy to perfection.

[13]*Erh Ch'êng I Shu*, XIII.

positively, acts upon the subject, arouses it, and stimulates it to action in the concrete field of human existence, both social and individual.

The Confucianists criticize Taoism and Buddhism for considering the subjective aspect of cognition in abstraction from the objective, regarding the "mind" as something subsisting independently of the external world to which it is, in truth, essentially related. Understanding the "mind" in this way, they try hard to bring it to perfection by subjecting it to a rigorous spiritual discipline. In the realization of pure subjectivity, Chu-tzŭ argues, the efforts of Taoists and Buddhists may come to be rewarded with some good results. But the pure subjectivity or pure Consciousness thus realized turns out to be lame and crippled. It cannot function properly in the concrete situations of human existence, being completely ignorant of the essential make-up of the external things among which it has to function. The knowledge of the self without knowing the essences of the things, Chu-tzŭ says,[14] is an illusory and baseless knowledge. If, for example, one feels comfortably satiated without eating anything, that feeling of satiation is a symptom of an illness. In the same way, what the Taoists and Buddhists consider the supreme knowledge is not worthy to be called knowledge, for in actual, practical situations of life, it reaches a deadlock in every direction. All this, according to Chu-tzŭ, comes from the fact that their knowledge does not reach the essences of the things in the objective world. The mind may be illumined, but the things are not illumined. The result is that the illumined mind runs idle in the dark void.

In a beautiful short poem Han Shan, the semi-legendary Zen-poet of the early T'ang dynasty depicts the life of a man of enlightenment in the following way:

> Among the floating clouds, among the flowing rivers
> There lives a man hidden in solitude.
> At daytime he strolls in the blue mountains,
> At night he sleeps under a towering rock.

[14] *Chu-tzŭ Wen Chi*, XLIV.

Spring goes, autumn comes; the time passes on.
Unruffled remains his mind, away from the world of dust.
Ah pleasant life! Nothing to be attached to!
Serene and quiet it flows on like an autumn river.

It will be interesting to observe that this poem which from the Buddhist point of view presents an ideal picture of the Perfect Man is, from the Confucianist point of view, nothing but a poetic description of human imperfection. Regarding the actuality of social existence as the "world of dust," the Buddhist hermit as depicted by Han Shan lives his solitary life in the depths of the mountain, away from the entanglement of human relationships, enjoying his freedom, calm as a quietly flowing autumn river, absorbed into Nature, completely identified with Nature. In the view of Confucianism, such is a typical example of a man lacking in human perfection, for he has gained his inner freedom only by severing himself from the ties of the world. He, therefore, does not know the world; he does not understand anything of the practical aspect of life.

For the Confucianist, the perfection of the mind is essentially correlated with the perfection of the knowledge of the things in the world. The two must go hand in hand. The two aspects of human perfection must necessarily be cultivated together. Enlightenment without an exact knowledge of the structure of the empirical world is for him nothing but a caricature of true knowledge.

It is of the very nature of the mind that it moves in response to the stimuli coming from the external world. Instead of trying in vain to suppress the agitations of the mind, one should rather concentrate one's effort on developing in the right direction the innate proclivity of the mind to be always active so that the mind may become capable of quickly responding — always "hitting the middle," to use Confucian terminology — to whatsoever appears before it, and of acting always correctly and without fail on the basis of a correct grasp of the situation. But in order to do so, it is absolutely necessary that one should have gained beforehand an exact knowledge of the things with regard to which the mind exercises its cognitive function.

Ch'êng Ming Tao, criticizing Buddhism, says:[15] "Buddhism aims only at going upwards (i.e., it is exclusively concerned with grasping the metaphysical through the experience of enlightenment), quite forgetful of coming downward to study (the essential nature of things in the physical world), so that what it pretends to attain by going upwards cannot itself be perfect. For the metaphysical grasped in this way is artificially separated from the physical. Tao, the metaphysical, in such an apprehension is not really Tao."

Nor can the self thus realized, Ming Tao continues, be the real self. "For the human mind is essentially of such a nature that it gets active as soon as it comes into contact with things. So as long as there are things in the external world, the mind is constantly in movement. In vain one tries to suppress it to make it like a withered tree or cold ashes. As soon as something appears in its presence, it becomes reactivated and responds to it in a sprightly manner. Such indeed is its nature. If we really want to stop the activity of the mind, the only way for us to take is to die, nothing else."[16]

It is only in the state of death that nothing sensible exists and the mind never becomes animated. Otherwise, from morning till night we are interminably encountered by diverse things and events in the sensible world. The discipline of "quiet sitting" has not been devised in order to suppress the agitations of the mind in the presence of sensible things. The "quiet sitting" whose essence lies in *ching*, "devout respectfulness" or "being profoundly solemn and serious," consists in keeping the mind always at its center — the zero-point of consciousness — so that no matter what appears before it, it can immediately go into action in response to the thing in strict accordance with the essence of the thing. The "quiet sitting," in other words, is a discipline by which the mind is trained to keep itself always alert and tightened, never slackened, in order that it be prepared to get into

[15] *Erh Ch'êng I Shu* (*op. cit.*), II, Part 1.
[16] *Erh Ch'êng I Shu* (*op. cit.*), II, Part 1.

lively action at the moment that anything sensible stimulates it. The "center of the mind" must be kept always quiet, clear and unclouded so that the mind might be constantly active in a correct way in its peripheral region.

The "seeing into the mind" is a catchphrase of the Zen Buddhists which is constantly on their lips. But, according to Chu-tzŭ,[17] they do not truly know the mind, because they do not know the things with which the mind is in essential correlation. The Buddhists consider the study of physical things a waste of time, or more positively something pernicious and perverted because in their view the physical world, having no *svabhāva*, is but an immense phantasmagoria. Thus the Buddhists are totally ignorant of what the *I Ching* calls the ontological region of things "below form," i.e., the region of physical things as distinguished from the things "above form." Says Chu-tzŭ[18] "Buddhism considers void and unreal what Confucianism considers solidly real."

The most disastrous consequence of the Buddhists' ignorance of the nature and structure of the empirical world is, from the viewpoint of Confucianism, that they end up by confusing the "below form" with the "above form," the physical with the metaphysical. The Buddhists assert that the physical is of an illusory nature only for those who have not yet attained enlightenment. Once one gets enlightened, one realizes that the empirical world *is* the Pure Land of Buddhahood. Seen with the eyes of an enlightened man, the physical *is* in itself the metaphysical. Everything is fine and good as it is. With enlightenment-experience, in other words, what has been essentially illusory and unreal turns suddenly into something real. The Buddhists, in the view of the Confucianists, make such an irresponsible assertion because they have no exact knowledge of the physical. This confusion of the physical with the metaphysical is succinctly expressed in Zen

[17] *Chu-tzŭ Wen Chi* (*op. cit.*), LXX.
[18] *Ibid.*, XLV.

Buddhism by the famous adage: "The ordinary mind — that is the Way."

In Confucian terminology this dictum will be reformulated by saying that all things in the empirical world are as such the Way or *li*. Certainly, the Confucianist says, each one of the things as they are actually experienced by us in this world is in a certain respect no other than the Way. But it is a mistake to assert, as Zen Buddhists do, that the things as such are the Way and that whatever one does is in itself an immediate manifestation of the Absolute. A physical thing, insofar as it is a "thing," is nothing but a "thing"; it is not the *li*; therefore it is, in that capacity, something different from the Way.

Says Chu-tzŭ:[19] "It is the *li* of a thing — the *li* alone, not the whole of the thing — that is the Way. It is wrong to identify all physical things directly with the Way. ... In the *I Ching* we read: 'What is above form (i.e., the metaphysical) is the Way while what is below form (i.e., the physical) are the concrete things.' What is meant thereby is that in each of the physical things there is contained the Way. It is a mistake to understand this saying as meaning that the physical things are in themselves the Way. Take, for example, this fan here. The fan is a physical thing. (As such it is not the Way itself.) But the fan contains in itself its own *li*. A fan is made up in such-and-such a way, and it must be employed in such-and-such a manner for such-and-such a purpose. That precisely is its *li*." The *li* of the fan is the Way, not the fan itself as a special thing called "fan."

The confusion is made because the Way does not exist independently of and apart from the physical things. A chair, for example, is a thing. The fact that it stands stable with four legs so that we can sit on it — that is the *li* of the chair. Without this *li*, a chair would not be a chair. The thing and its *li* are inseparable from one another. But we should not mistake this essential inseparability for an essential identity.

The mistake committed by the Zen Buddhists in this respect

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[19] *Chu-tzŭ Yü Lei* (*op. cit.*), LXII.

comes out in a most glaring manner when they assert that whatever one does in daily life is itself an immediate self-expression of the Way. In fact many famous Zen masters have bluntly expressed this view in the following way. When we feel hungry, we eat, when thirsty we drink, and when sleepy we sleep. All these natural, daily acts are the Way. There is nothing extraordinary about the Way.

P'ang Yün (J.: Hō-on), one of the most outstanding Zen laymen in the T'ang dynasty, is said to have once remarked: "I carry water and I carry firewood. This is in itself something absolute. This precisely is a miraculous working of the Tao." In the eyes of Chu-tzŭ, such a view of our daily activity arises from a confusion between the physical and the metaphysical. Walking slowly and modestly behind your superior is an act of walking. Similarly, walking with a swaggering gait in front of your superior is also an act of walking. These two manners of walking are not a bit different from each other as "walking." In both cases you do walk along the street.[20] But for a Confucianist the former is the right conduct in this situation; it alone is an actualization of the Way. Strutting down the street ahead of one's superior, though it *is* walking, cannot possibly be the Way. This means that we should not regard the ordinary act of walking itself as an actualization of the Way.

Concerning the above-mentioned saying of P'ang Yün, Chu-tzŭ points out that carrying water or carrying firewood cannot be considered "something absolute," a "miraculous working of Tao." Only when the act of carrying water or firewood is done in the proper and correct manner, is it entitled to be considered "something absolute" and a "miraculous working of Tao." If you carry water clumsily or carry it to a wrong place, how can you call it miraculous or absolute?

Eating and drinking, putting on and taking off clothes, sleeping, seeing and hearing — indeed whatever one does in ordinary life is in Zen considered to be a self-manifestation of the Way. This, Chu-tzŭ

[20]See *Mencius*, XVI.

remarks,[21] is due to the fact that Buddhism does not distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad. The Buddhists cannot distinguish between them simply because they lack the basis on which it is possible to distinguish between them. The basis is provided by a methodical inquiry into the *li* or essences of the things, the discipline of *ch'iung li* which I explained, in my previous lecture.[22]

VII

The preceding has, I believe, made it sufficiently clear that Confucianism recognizes the objective reality of the external world and the physical things existing in it. Upon this basis it establishes its ontology with all its practical consequences, as we have just seen. There is in Confucianism a naive — so it would seem — trust in the cognitive power of perception, an unshakable belief that our mind, if it is made to function properly and rightly, is capable of perceiving the things as they really are, and that the things exist in the physical dimension of Being as solid, objective realities. In this respect, Confucian philosophy, of all the major schools of Oriental philosophy, is closest to the position of naive realism. And the important point is that this "naive" attitude toward the world of empirical experience does not lie in the peripheral region of Confucian thought. Quite the contrary; it is the very basis or axis of its ontology. The whole of the Confucian ontology is permeated by the spirit of what we have called above robust realism.

From such an observation, however, we must not come to a hasty conclusion that Confucian ontology is naive realism. For a serious difference is disclosed between the two as soon as we examine more closely what the Confucianist philosopher means by the "essence" or *li* of a thing. Each of the physical things in the empirical world as conceived by the Confucianist philosopher will then be found to

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[21] *Chu-tzŭ Yü Lei* (*op. cit.*), LXII, *Wen chi* (*op. cit.*), LIX.

[22] See *Eranos 43–1974*, pp. 411–47. [Editor's note: See volume I, pp. 245–282.]

have a very original internal structure. In Confucianism the physical world is structured in a peculiar way, which makes its world-view something completely different from that of naive realism as we commonly understand the term. We shall bring this paper to an end by clarifying this important aspect of Confucian philosophy.

VIII

As I have repeatedly pointed out, the surface structure of Confucian ontology is very much like naive realism, or we might at least say that compared with Taoism, Buddhism and Vedānta, the Confucianist position manifests some striking resemblances to naive realism. According to Confucianism the physical world is real and every thing and every event in the world is a reality.

On what basis then, are the things in the empirical world considered to be real? They are real, the Confucianist replies, because each one of them is an ontological transformation of the ultimate Reality, Tao. In Vedānta, too, which in this respect stands closest to Confucianism, each one of the physical things is a transformation of the ultimate Reality, Brahman. But, as we saw above, in the Vedāntic view it is an epistemic transformation, not an ontological transformation, of the ultimate Reality. In other words, the ultimate Reality *appears* as such-and-such an individual thing owing mainly to the relative and limited capacity of our organs of perception. Otherwise, Brahman itself remains permanently the selfsame; it is immutable and changeless. It is our mind that in accordance with its natural disposition "superimposes" various forms upon the absolutely undifferentiated surface of the Reality.

Not so in Confucianism. Here it is the ultimate Reality that transforms itself into myriads of individual things. Tao never ceases to change. And this ceaseless, eternal change of Tao is the Reality. At every moment of the ontological transformation of the Way, at every point of the stream of this universal change of Being, we encounter the Way (Tao) itself through the physically perceivable things. In each

of the infinitely various and variegated things which come into the domain of our empirical experience, we are in direct contact with the Way in a particularized form.

Thus we are faced at this point with the problem of the ontological transference of the Way from the metaphysical dimension to the physical. How is this transference — or ontological "descent," we might say — of the Way effectuated? That is the problem.

The ontological descent of the Way, the Confucianist philosopher answers, is induced by a subtle and complicated interplay of the two cosmic and elemental forces: Yin and Yang. The Yin and Yang are the two physical forces or factors inherent in the Way, which, because they are the two inherent forms of the creative energy of the Way itself, necessarily transform the metaphysical into the physical. The perpetual change of the Way is necessitated by its own internal creativity represented by the Yin and Yang that are opposed and complementary to each other. The universal change of things (*i*) which according to the *I Ching* is nothing other than the Way, is an ontological process by which the Way, descending from its metaphysical dimension, manifests itself in an infinity of things and events in the physical dimension of its own.

The upshot of all this is that all physical things that we find in the empirical world are each a particular combination of the Yin and Yang. The important thing to note is that there can be absolutely no exception to it. Every single thing, whatever it may be, is in its essential structure a combination of the Yin and Yang. Every thing is an ontological reality in this and only in this sense.

If such is the case, and if, as we saw above, we are, according to Confucianism, naturally so made that we can *perceive* things as they really are, it would be but natural that Confucianism should demand that perception be primarily directed toward this aspect of the things. And such is the only form of perception which is recognized as authentic in Confucianism. All other forms of perception, that is, all forms of perception which are not focused upon the Yin and Yang factors of a thing are, if not pseudo-perception, secondary

perception. Otherwise expressed, in perceiving a thing we are to perceive it as a particular crystallization of the Yin and the Yang energy. The reality of a thing is perceivable only in this way.

Perception, thus, in the Confucian sense does not consist in passively receiving stimuli coming from an external object through a sense organ or sense organs in combination, and then positively constructing a mental image of the object out of the given sense-data. Perception consists primarily in directly observing the dosage of the Yin and Yang factors actually at work in the thing. For, from the point of view of Confucianism, an individual thing is essentially a particular configuration of the Yin and the Yang energy. Only when we have learnt to see in every thing in the world a transformation of the Way as it manifests itself in the physical dimension of our world-experience in the form of an ontological fusion of the Yin and Yang, only then does our mental act become something worthy to be called perception.

Let me explain this point through a few simple examples. Suppose there are before us a stone and a rubber ball. Through the sense of sight we see the particular shape of the stone and its grayish color. Through the sense of touch we know that it is hard and rough. Out of the sensory material thus provided we form a mental image of a stone corresponding to the externally existent object. In the case of a rubber ball, on the contrary, we see its round shape and whitish color, and we feel through the touch that it is elastic and flexible, and its surface smooth. On the basis of the sensory experience of these and other features we have a percept corresponding to the external object called a rubber ball. Such is briefly the normal form of our perception of the physical objects.

Quite different from this is what a trained Confucianist is supposed to observe in a stone and a rubber ball. Before everything else, the Confucianist recognizes the preponderance of the Yang force in the stone whereas in the rubber ball the preponderance of the Yin force. Not that sensation does not play any part in this observation.

Quite the contrary; the Confucianist admits that sensation does play an important role in any act of perception. But the hardness, softness, colors, shapes and other sensory properties of things are in the present context for the Confucianist all secondary — if not trivial — factors. At least primarily they do not matter. What really does matter is the fact that the hard-soft opposition is essentially a Yang — Yin opposition. And it is in terms of this latter opposition that the stone and the rubber ball are perceived.

To give another example, fire is hot to the touch while water is cold. This is a simple sensory fact. In naive realism fire will naturally be considered a physical entity with hotness as its characteristic property; water is in such a view another physical entity with the essential property of being cold. Confucianism, on the contrary, recognizes as a more fundamental fact the opposition of the Yin and Yang in the opposition of fire and water. Fire is a Yang thing while water is a Yin thing. This is of decisive importance in the perception of fire and water.

There is, however, a sort of oversimplification in our statement that fire is a Yang thing and water is a Yin thing. As I have suggested above, the Confucianist philosopher sees between the Yin and Yang infinitely subtle and complicated interactions. Everything, without a single exception, represents a peculiar combination or fusion of the two forces. Nothing in the physical world is absolutely Yin or absolutely Yang. Even in a thing which outwardly and at first glance appears to be purely Yin, there is contained an imperceptibly small dosage of the Yang force which has stealthily crept into it and which is, though invisible, already at work.

The tenth month of the year in the Chinese calendar, for example, is structurally represented in the *I Ching* with the Hexagram II, *K'un*.

The Hexagram is composed exclusively of Yin lines. On the surface there is nothing indicative of the Yang. In this month, or more strictly, at the winter solstice, the Yang has completely disappeared. The world is filled up with the Yin energy; the Yin now is at its apogee. But this is only the visible aspect of the situation. The moment the Yin reaches its apogee the Yang already starts to make its return; the Yang energy, no matter how faint and imperceptible it may be, is already there. Says Chu-tzŭ on this point:[23] "Do not think that the *K'un* Hexagram contains absolutely no Yang element. The Yang here has just been born. It is still so faint and weak; it is not strong enough to fill up even one recognizable segment of a line so it cannot be represented by a full-fledged Yang line. But you should not misconstrue the make-up of the *K'un* Hexagram, thinking that it is pure Yin in the sense that there is absolutely no Yang element involved therein."

This would seem to suggest that the Yin-line at the bottom of this Hexagram has a remarkably subtle structure. Like all the rest of the Yin-lines that constitute this Hexagram, the lowest — which in the *I Ching* always represents the place where change starts — is obviously Yin. But there is an ontological tension contained in this particular Yin-line in the sense that it is already changing in the direction of the Yang. There is, so to speak, a weak but undeniable propensity toward the Yang. It will be interesting to remark in this connection that the tenth month which superficially is a pure Yin-period of the year is called in China the "Yang-month" exactly as a reminder of the presence of a Yang element amidst the surrounding Yin forces.

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[23] *Ibid.*, LXXI. Also *Erh Ch'êng I Shu*, XVIII.

Keeping in mind what has just been said about the absolute inseparability of Yin and Yang from each other, let us go back to the previously given example of fire and water. Let us recall at the outset that fire is essentially a Yang thing while water is a Yin thing. That is to say, fire, when we consider it as an integrated whole without breaking it up into its component parts, presents itself as something of a Yang nature, and water considered in the same way, is of a Yin nature. However, the being of a Yang nature of fire does not preclude the intrusion of a Yin factor into the very make-up of fire. Similarly the Yin nature of water can — and according to Confucianism, must — be essentially contaminated by an admixture of a Yang factor.

In fact the *I Ching* represents the inner structure of fire by a trigram consisting of two Yang-lines with one Yin-line between them. The fact that there are two Yang-lines indicates the overwhelming preponderance of Yang (hotness in this case) in the dimension of sensory experience, while the one Yin-line indicates the possibility of its cooling down as the thing burns itself up. Or, according to another interpretation, the structure of the trigram is a symbolic presentation of the fact that burning fire is bright but that there is in its center a dark zone. The *I Ching* symbol for water, on the contrary, is a trigram

consisting of two Yin-lines with one Yang-line in between. The immediate sensory impression produced by water is coldness, but it contains within itself the possibility of becoming warm or hot, if heated. Another traditional interpretation is that seen from outside, deep water looks impenetrably dark (*Yin*), but seen from inside, it is faintly illumined (*Yang*).

These are just a few easy examples. The important thing is that the *I*

Ching and Confucian philosophy which is based on the *I Ching* consider every thing existing in the physical dimension of Being in terms of the Yin and Yang factors.

In the typically Confucianist view, it is not that a thing (fire, for example) is Yang because it produces in us the sensation of hotness; exactly the reverse is the case. When there is actualized a peculiar Yin-Yang combination with a preponderance of the Yang-factor so that there is realized before us a very special Yin-Yang-configuration, we get the sensation of burning hotness; and in this special Yin-Yang-configuration we recognize a thing which is ordinarily designated by the name "fire." This particular name, according to the Confucianists, has been instituted by the ancient Sages for indicating that particular Yin-Yang-configuration. Perception here means perceiving this configuration as the most essential feature of the perceptual process.

Thus in the perception of fire and water, for example, attention is primarily directed toward them as they appear in the dimension in which the Yin and Yang are variously combined with one another. Understanding "perception" in this manner is not to be taken as a negation of ordinary perceptual experience. Nor is it the transcending of perceptual experience. Rather, what is proposed is a particular modification of our ordinary way of perceiving things. Every thing must be perceived primarily in terms of Yin and Yang. That is to say, every thing must be directly *perceived* as either a Yang thing with an admixture of a Yin element or a Yin thing with an admixture of a Yang element.

As I stated at the outset, the Confucian world-view resembles naive realism in that (1) it regards the physical world as an objectively subsisting world and standing opposed to, and distinguished from, the perceiving subject, and that (2) it regards the physical world with all the things and events that are perceivable therein as essentially real. But the theoretical ground on which Confucianism establishes this realism is totally different from that of naive realism. For Confucian realism is the realism of Tao, all things in the physical world being considered each a particular ontological self-articulation of the

Absolute — an idea which is totally alien to naive realism. But the difference between the two comes out in the most conspicuous way when we examine, as we have just done, albeit in quite a cursory manner, the nature of the Confucian epistemology with its emphasis on the presence of the Yin and Yang factors in the act of perception. We can, I think, safely assume that in such a perspective the physical world of our ordinary experience should appear to the Confucianist philosopher as something endowed with a unique structure which makes it a completely different world from the world seen with the eyes of naive realism, let alone Taoism, Buddhism and Vedānta.

THE *I CHING* MANDALA AND CONFUCIAN METAPHYSICS

ERANOS 45
(1976)

The Mandala[1] is, as is well known, the basic theme and the very core of the spirituality of the Tibetan Tantra. The Tantric Buddhism of Tibet in both its theoretical and practical aspects centers round the image of Mandala, whether in a pictorially visible or mysteriously invisible form. It is but natural that the wide-spread interest in the Tibetan Tantra should have evoked in the minds of those who are concerned with the spiritual traditions in the East and West an unusual interest in the Mandala and its religious and philosophical potentials.

The general interest in the Mandala is nowadays such that it has far exceeded the boundaries of Indology and Tibetology and that the Mandala has now come to be regarded as one of the universal problems directly related to the mysteries of the substructure of the human psyche, as something essential to, and inherent in human nature.

In such a spiritual atmosphere, many are those today who talk about the *I Ching* Mandala. It is characteristic of these people that they connect the *I Ching* world-view with Mandala, as if there were a natural — and even historical — relationship between the two. They deal with the problem as if the *I Ching* as we know it now were a product of a mandalic consciousness, which it is certainly not.

Of course I do not deny the existence of some truth in such an

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The theme of Eranos 45 (1976), that is, the 45th Eranos Conference Yearbook, which is the compilation of lectures given at the Eranos Conference in 1976, was "Einheit und Verschiedenheit — Oneness and Variety — L'un et le divers."

understanding of the *I Ching*. Otherwise I would not have chosen the problem of the *I Ching* Mandala as the very topic of my Eranos lecture for this year. What I would like to say is only that the problem must be discussed, if it is to be dealt with at all, with great caution and some reserve. We must, in short, be very careful in talking about the *I Ching* Mandala. For the *I Ching* is surely not a book of Mandala; nor does it center round the concept of Mandala, as is the case with the Tibetan Tantra.

Those scholars and thinkers who have contributed toward the birth and growth of the book called the *I Ching* as a Confucian classic through a long period of more than ten centuries, have none of them consciously tried to construct a Mandala. In the process of the structuralization of the *I Ching* symbols and the formation of the major philosophical ideas of the *I Ching*, no intentional and fully conscious effort has been made to present the *I Ching* world-view in the form of a Mandala. Neither the ancient sages who laid the foundation of the *I Ching* by establishing the eight trigrams and the sixty-four hexagrams and attaching to them archetypal images nor the Sung dynasty Confucianists who gave philosophical interpretations to those symbols and images aimed at drawing a Mandala. As I have suggested at the outset, the Mandala was originally something peculiar to the Tantric Buddhism of India. Introduced into Tibet, it developed into a full-fledged religion and a spiritual way. Spreading further into Japan through China in the T'ang dynasty it gave birth to an extraordinary mandalic Buddhism called Shingon. But the *I Ching* specialists in China had no real contact with this line of Buddhism.

On the other hand, however, it is not at all unreasonable and meaningless to study the *I Ching* in terms of the mandalic consciousness. As I have said before — and Carl Gustav Jung has amply shown it from the point of view of his depth-psychology — the Mandala-formation is a universal phenomenon, something deep-rooted in the

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[1]Except in a few special cases, the Sanskrit word *maṇḍala* will for simplicity's sake be spelt in this paper Mandala.

substructure of the human psyche. It is a widely observable fact that the psychic reality has a very marked tendency to express itself in Mandalas or Mandala-like forms, a natural tendency which is disclosed in a most conspicuous manner in the critical moments of personal disintegration and decentralization, but more generally in moments of strong psychological tension of any sort. In this respect an analytic study of the nature and structure of the Mandala and Mandala-forming consciousness would seem to be very fruitful, and indeed indispensable, in any field of study directly related to the human mind, whether religion, philosophy, art, psychology or psychopathology.

It will be evident, then, that the *I Ching* also could and should be approached from this special point of view. It is interesting to observe in this respect that what the *I Ching* itself calls Time, i.e., a particular archetypal situation of man and human relationship, which is symbolized by each of the sixty-four hexagrams, is almost invariably a tension-situation, whether positive or negative; that is to say, every hexagram is so formed as to present in a symbolic and archetypal form a situation of real tension or a situation in which a tension has just been relieved or is just about to arise. In any case it has to do with tension. And in point of fact, when we approach the *I Ching* from the point of view of Mandala-consciousness, we do find important ideas which may justifiably be regarded in their essential structure as mandalic. Moreover, it is also true that in the course of its historical formation, extending over many centuries, the interpretation of the *I Ching* came conspicuously close to the Mandala-consciousness two times, once in the Han dynasty (202 B.C.–220 A.D.) and then in the Sung dynasty (960–1279 A.D.).

Everybody knows that the *I Ching* is not a book written by a single author at one definite time. It is, on the contrary, a book composed of a number of strata belonging to different periods of Chinese history, and many thinkers, mainly of the Confucian school, contributed to their formation. Discarding all philological details which are

extremely complicated, I would simply state that for the purposes of the present paper, it is reasonable to recognize five major strata in the historical formation of the *I Ching*.

(1) The most ancient, i.e., the most primitive, stratum of the *I Ching* consists of the eight basic trigrams and the sixty-four hexagrams. Nobody knows who devised these mathematical combinations of the two lines, one divided and the other undivided, although the venerated tradition concerning the origin of Chinese civilization attributes the establishment of the eight trigrams to the first legendary ruler of China, the sage-king Fu Hsi, a mythical being with a human face and the body of a serpent, who is supposed to have lived in the twenty-ninth century B.C. The *I Ching* itself endorses this view. It says:

> It was immemorial antiquity, when Fu Hsi was the ruler of the whole world. Looking up, he observed images in heaven. Looking down he observed patterns on earth. He further observed the beautiful figures of birds and beasts and the various characteristics of the places each suited to a particular kind of being. Close at hand, in his own body he recognized various norms. At a distance, in things around him, he found various forms. And on the basis of these observations he devised the eight trigrams, by means of which man became for the first time able to have an insight into the mysterious qualities of Nature and to classify the basic modes of being of the myriad things in the world.[2]

I have quoted this passage here not because of its historical accuracy, but because it sheds light on the symbolic nature of the eight trigrams as it is understood by the *I Ching* itself. It must, however, be remarked at once, that the passage belongs to a later stratum. But it deserves special attention in that it makes an important suggestion that the eight basic trigrams were most probably devised as a simple system of symbols for the archetypes of all things, that is to say, a

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[2] *Hsi Tz'ŭ Chuan* II. As we shall see presently, the *Hsi Tz'ŭ Chuan* ("The Great Treatise" in Wilhelm's translation) is one of the Ten Commentaries and philosophically the most important. [Editor's note: See note 4 on page 45.]

symbolic presentation of all things reduced to their most primitive or primordial archetypal images.

The truth, however, is that nothing certain is known about the one who really invented the trigrams and hexagrams. Most probably they were produced by a group of scholars charged with the work of preparing and preserving the official documents at the Court in the early years of the Western Chou dynasty (1027–771 B.C.).

(2) The second stratum consists of the oracle pronouncements attached to the hexagrams and the six individual lines composing each hexagram. The legendary tradition usually attributes the writing of these comments on the hexagrams to King Wên and those on the six lines to his son, the Duke of Chou. But, again, the truth seems to be that some of the most important oracle pronouncements which had been carefully preserved in the Court archives were conveniently distributed to the hexagrams and their single lines by the officials, probably during the time between the end of the Western Chou and the Spring and Autumn Period (722–479 B.C.).

These two strata, (1) and (2), consisting of the eight trigrams, sixty-four hexagrams, and the oracle words attached to them constitute the original corpus or the primitive text of the *I Ching*.

It is to be remarked that this original corpus of the *I Ching* contains nothing mandalic. In other words, we find in it nothing that would satisfy the essential conditions (which I shall explain later) for the formation of Mandala. Considered at this stage of development, the *I Ching* is still an oracle book, a book of pure divination. And its divinatory method was purely of a mathematical nature. Unlike in the case of the method of tortoise-shell oracle and bone oracle that had been practiced in the preceding ages, the *I Ching* hexagrams were simply abstract patterns based upon numbers. And where there is no structured visualization there is naturally no possibility for the formation of a Mandala.

To this primitive corpus of the *I Ching* ten different explanatory notes or commentaries known as the "Ten Wings of the *I Ching*" came to be appended later on. They are traditionally attributed to

Confucius, but in reality all of them are works of the followers of the teaching of Confucius in later ages.

(3) The third stratum which is the oldest of these commentaries is an explanation of the oracle words (i.e., the second stratum) attached to the hexagrams and each of the single lines of every hexagram. At this stage the *I Ching* comes into contact with the book of *Chung Yung*, the "Doctrine of the Mean," a work attributed to the grandson of Confucius. It is evident that philosophically this part of the *I Ching* is directly connected with the first half of the "Doctrine of the Mean." This means that it came into existence roughly in the fourth and third centuries B.C.

The most remarkable thing about this oldest stratum of the commentarial part of the *I Ching* is the fact that it presents a philosophical world-view based on the opposition of two cosmic principles: the hard and strong on the one hand and the soft, weak and flexible on the other, the former being indicated by the undivided line while the latter by the divided line. The Yin and Yang, in other words, are not yet key-terms at this stage. The concept of the Yin-Yang opposition, which is now so closely associated with our understanding of the *I Ching* world-view that it is absolutely impossible for us to have an image of the latter except on the basis of the former, does not play at all here a significant role. The words Yin and Yang themselves rarely appear. And when they do appear they remain in the periphery. In this stratum of the *I Ching*, a divided line does not indicate the Yin principle; it is the symbol of the soft and flexible. Likewise an undivided line, instead of indicating the Yang principles, indicates the hard and strong.

The opposition of the hard and soft immediately reminds us of the philosophical world of Lao-tzŭ. It is evident that the two terms have originated from the Taoist tradition. As is well known, Lao-tzŭ, recognizing the polarity of the hard and soft as the two basic principles regulating all existence, cosmic as well as human, emphasizes the importance of choosing always and in every matter the soft and weak.

The same two principles, brought into the world-view of the *I*

Ching, are evaluated differently; they are given a new, different interpretation in accordance with the spirit of the above-mentioned Confucian classic, the book of the "Doctrine of the Mean." Instead of giving preference to either of the two principles, the *I Ching* at this stage of development takes the view that what is of supreme importance is the "mean" or the middle position between the hard and soft. The word "middle" in this case naturally means "neither too much nor too little," that is, neither too hard nor too soft. This is exactly in accord with the main idea of the "Doctrine of the Mean."[3]

(4) The next stratum, which is philosophically by far the most important, consists of *Hsi Tz'ŭ Chuan*, the so-called "Great Treatise" and *Wên Yen Chuan* a philosophical commentary on the meanings of the first two hexagrams. Most probably the first half of the *Shuo Kua Chuan*, "Discussion of the Trigrams" also belongs to this stratum. I shall refrain from spending time in explaining concretely the contents of these treatises.[4] I shall be content with simply stating that in the book of *I Ching* as we know it now, they represent its theoretical and purely philosophical aspect and that chronologically the coming-into-being of this part of the book seems to coincide with that of the latter half of the "Doctrine of the Mean," that is, around the third century B.C.

But the most important point to note, particularly for our present purposes, is that in this stratum the opposition of the hard and soft is replaced by the opposition of Yin and Yang. The divided and undivided lines indicate here primarily the Yin energy and Yang energy respectively. This indicates that the *I Ching* at this stage came into contact with the ideas of the Yin-Yang School which had until then developed quite independently.

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[3]On the relationship between the *I Ching* and the "Doctrine of the Mean," there is an excellent work, Yoshio Takeuchi: *Eki-to Chūyō-no Kenkyū* (Japanese), Tokyo, 1943.

[4]A good explanation is found in Hellmut Wilhelm: *Eight Lectures on the I Ching*, New York, 1960; Richard Wilhelm (tr. Cary F. Baynes): *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, Princeton, 1950, 1967.

We may note that the scholars of the Yin-Yang School were occupied with natural philosophy; that is to say, they were primarily interested in giving a "scientific" explanation of the origin and growth of the universe and all natural events in terms of the waxing and waning activities of the Yin and Yang forces. This theory was combined with another, namely the theory of the Five Elements of Nature, i.e., Fire, Water, Wood, Metal and Earth. These Five Elements were then correlated with the four seasons of the year and the four cardinal points of the universe. The Fire was correlated with summer and placed in the south, the Water with winter in the north, the Wood with spring in the east, and the Metal with autumn in the west, while the Earth was regarded as neutral or commonly shared by all and placed in the center. This is clearly a primitive form of Mandala (Figure 1).

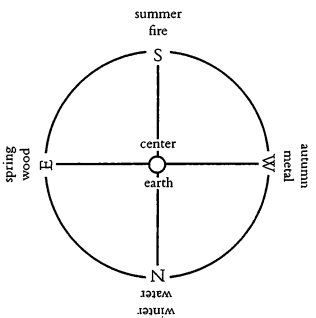

Figure 1

On the other hand, the scholars of this school were deeply involved in the practice of occult arts such as astrology, numerology, magic and divination. This latter aspect of their activity also contributed a great deal toward the development of a mandalic understanding of the *I Ching* hexagrams.

The Confucianists assimilated much of the teaching of this School into their own system of thought. The most notable effect of this contact was the adoption by the Confucianists of Yin and Yang. And from this stage on, the Yin and Yang became the two poles of the *I Ching* world-view in its entirety, and an elaborate philosophical

system was built up upon this basis. The *I Ching* thereby became a book of philosophy in addition to being a book of divination, and in that double capacity it firmly established its position as an authentic classic of the official Confucianism.

(5) As regards the fifth and the latest stratum of the *I Ching*[5] in its historical formation there is not much to say from the viewpoint of the present paper, except that to it belongs an interesting treatise on the trigrams called *Shuo Kua Chuan*, which is important in determining the basic archetypal images to be associated with the eight trigrams. This stratum as a whole came into existence probably in the early years of the Han dynasty, i.e., the second century B.C.

II

After these rather lengthy preliminary remarks, which I think are strictly necessary for our immediate purposes, we shall now turn to our main subject: the nature and structure of the *I Ching* Mandala.

Our problems, presented in more precise terms, will be: (1) In what sense and in what respect are we justified in talking about the Mandala and mandalic state of consciousness in reference to the *I Ching*? (2) To what extent have the Confucianists themselves gone in the past toward mandalizing the *I Ching* view of the universe and man?

In order that we might deal with these problems in a sensible manner, it will be evident that we must have beforehand a clear idea as to what kind of thing the Mandala is. Let us, then, start by trying to answer this crucial question: What is the Mandala? Naturally the answer must be sought for first of all from Tantric Buddhism which

[5] *Shuo Kua Chuan* (its latter half), *Hsü Kua Chuan*, which gives a somewhat forced explanation of the sequence of the hexagrams as we actually find it in the present *I Ching*, and *Tsa Kua Chuan*, are miscellaneous notes on the names of the hexagrams. According to some, the so-called *Ta Hsiang* also belongs to this stratum.

represents the most typical and authentic form in which the mandalic consciousness has expressed itself.

The most fundamental idea underlying all forms of the Tantric tradition in Buddhism is that the "truth" cannot but express itself in a visible form. The word "truth" here means the absolute Truth, i.e., the Reality as directly reflected in the inner eye of enlightenment, while the phrase "a visible form" means a primal, primordial image which emerges spontaneously out of the "mysterious" depths of the mind into the "sacred," i.e., purified, space of the contemplative awareness. Thus the Truth or the ultimate metaphysical Reality which, taken in itself, is absolutely undifferentiated and indeterminate, is considered to be of such a nature that it necessarily articulates itself into archetypal images forming among themselves a particular system or systems. A visual pattern, thus spontaneously made, of archetypal images that are indicative of the internal structure of the absolute Truth is in the Tantric tradition called Mandala. A Mandala, in short, is a visualization of the invisible Mystery of Reality as it is articulated into a certain formal pattern of images in the illumined awareness of a contemplative mystic.

For the people of Tantra the absolute Truth is not something transcendental lying beyond and apart from sensuous forms. The Truth, as long as it is not perceived in a sensuous form, remains an abstraction. The ultimate Reality is not a vacuum; it is a metaphysical plenum. And this plenitude of being reveals its mysteries to the contemplative awareness of man as archetypal images arranged in a mandalic form. The most primitive and basic of all mandalic forms is a circle. And as a matter of fact, the Sanskrit word *maṇḍala* in ordinary usage means a circle or anything round such a disk, ring, ball, wheel and orb. According to a more sophisticated interpretation, *maṇḍala* etymologically comes from *maṇḍa* meaning the scum of boiled rice or the thick and rich part of milk, cream, which on an abstract level of thinking naturally means quintessence. But this latter understanding of the word *maṇḍala* also comes to be associated with the image of a circle because in the Tantric tradition of Buddhism, the

"quintessence" is visualized as the "center."

Let us now consider the purely formal aspect of the Mandala understood in this way. The Mandala takes its start from a single point, a dot. In the present context, we are at this initial stage already supposed to be aware of the point being potentially the center of circle. The original point, in other words, is considered a point of highly compressed and concentrated energy which naturally expands and disperses into all directions, like the rays of the sun. The infinite number of the lines formed by the evolving movement of the central energy are given definite positions in terms of the four cardinal points: south, west, north, and east (Figure 2). Be it remarked

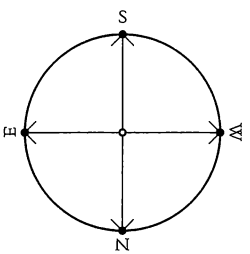

Figure 2

in passing that according to the ancient Chinese conception of the universe, the south naturally is placed above and the north below. The center and the four points of compass determine a circle indicating the periphery or the extreme outer limit to which the energy, radiating from the center, reaches and then turns again toward the center to be reabsorbed into it.

For a right understanding of the make-up of the Mandala-consciousness it is important to note that the circle should thus be represented primarily as a dynamic picture of the continuous process of the diastole and systole, expansion and contraction, evolution and involution, of the central energy, of whose nature and function I shall give a detailed explanation in the following. Suffice it at this stage to say that, as a mandalic pattern, the circle should not be taken as a

purely geometric figure, but rather as a visual presentation of the paradigm of the cosmic energy in the process of perpetual unfolding and infolding from the center to the periphery and back from the periphery to the center.

In order to complete the description of the formal aspect of the Mandala, we must add that by connecting the four cardinal points one with another with four straight lines, we obtain a square within the circle and that at the same time we obtain two large triangles and four small triangles (Figure 3). And if the eight areas thus produced

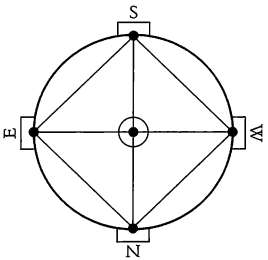

Figure 3

within the circle, together with the central sphere and the four projections at the cardinal points are filled in with the soothing or frightening images of the archetypal forces of the psyche — usually figures of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities, spirits, demons and beasts — symmetrically arranged, then we have before our eyes an example of a primitive form of Mandala.

The circle thus structured may be said to constitute the sacred space of the Mandala. But we have as yet considered only the formal constitution of the Mandala. In order that the geometric figure become an authentic, full-fledged Mandala, the circle must be experienced by us, must be lived by us, as something essentially spiritual and metaphysical. The circle, though outwardly remaining the same circle, must inwardly be transformed into something entirely different. To this inward aspect of the Mandala I shall now turn.

With regard to this aspect of the Mandala, I shall begin by pointing out that the Mandala is an archetypal diagram of two different but closely related aspects of Reality: (1) psychological and (2) metaphysical.

In respect of the first of these two aspects Carl Gustav Jung once said that the Mandala is the psychological expression of totality of the self — the totality of the self, or the totality of a person consisting of the conscious and the unconscious, individual as well as collective. The emphasis here is naturally on the unconscious dimension of the mind, the dark regions of the subconscious ego, in which various psychic forces, some of them being salubrious and some noxious, are constantly at work, always ready to rise up onto the surface stratum of the daylight consciousness as threatening or fascinating phantasms.

These psychic forces which, if they are left in a state of chaos, could and often do work as powerful agents for the disintegration of the personality can be brought into an order peculiar to them with the help of a special technique of meditation. That technique is the Mandala-formation and Mandala-meditation, which has historically found a full development in the Tantric traditions in the East. The technique, in brief, consists in bringing order out of the chaotic state of the psychic forces by curbing and turning the blindly outpouring energies inward and gradually leading them toward the primordial center of the self. The disrupting forces, once brought back to the central still point, gradually calm down. One begins to observe one's spiritual energy evolving toward the periphery, i.e., the empirical dimension of the mind directly in touch with the physical world, and then involving back toward the center in quite an orderly and peaceful fashion. In the Mandala with its symmetrical arrangement of the archetypal images one recognizes — one experiences, rather — one's own inner world as an entirely new, organic and integral whole.[6]

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[6]Cf. Giuseppe Tucci: *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala* (tr. A. H. Brodrick), London, 3rd ed. 1971, pp. 132–133.

The Mandala in this sense is a psychogram. It is a graphic presentation of the psychic reality reduced to its archetypal essentials. It is a symbolic picture of the diastole and systole of the psychic energy concentrated in the innermost point within the psyche. The Mandala shows graphically how this concentrated energy streams out in all directions in successive waves of radiation and, having reached the ultimate limit of expansion, returns back to the original point.

The Mandala is also a diagram showing the dynamic relation between the absolutely non-articulate state of consciousness and the articulate. It is in this sense a graphic presentation of the tension between the One and the Many observable in the very structure of the psychic reality. It shows how in this inner world the One becomes Many and the Many is reabsorbed into the One.

The One is the primal matrix of all psychic and psychological events. It is the undifferentiated whole which differentiates itself into the multiplicity of the archetypes. It is the point from which all issues forth and to which all returns to go forth again in a new wave of emanation. It is the absolute consciousness which is no-consciousness because one is conscious of nothing at this stage. It is no-consciousness, yet in reality it is the origin of consciousness. I would call it the zero-point of consciousness. In the Confucian philosophy of the Sung dynasty this zero-point of consciousness is called *wei-fa*, literally the "not-yet activated," or *wei-fa chin chung*, i.e., the central equipoise of the state of *wei-fa*. As I have explained in one of my previous Eranos lectures, the leading Confucianists of the Sung dynasty maintain that the zero-point of consciousness is to be reached only by one's going through a rigorous spiritual discipline known as "quiet sitting."

Turning now to the second of the two aspects of the Mandala as distinguished above, namely, its metaphysical aspect, we shall remark that the Mandala is a cosmogram, but that it is a very peculiar cosmogram, being as it is a paradigmatic plan of the cosmos arising from the imaginal (which of course is not the same as imaginary)

dimension of the contemplative awareness. In terms of pure philosophy the Mandala may best be characterized as a visible, geometric presentation of the most essential metaphysical idea of emanationism. For it presents in a schematic form the metaphysical process by which the absolute Reality produces out of itself the world of multiplicity, ranging from the purely spiritual or ideal to the physical and phenomenal. Exactly as was the case with its psychic aspect, the Mandala shows here how from the absolute One there emanates the Many and how the Many goes back to the One, except that this time the whole thing is taken as a metaphysical process of emanation and reabsorption. It differs from the purely intellectual and rationalist type of metaphysics in that the process is here the drama of cosmic disintegration and reintegration, and that it is expected to be relived and reexperienced as such by the individual. In other words, the cosmic drama must be internalized as a drama which is constantly and continuously enacted within the psyche. And in this respect, the metaphysical aspect of the Mandala-consciousness becomes ultimately identical with its psychic aspect.

Taken as a cosmogram, a metaphysical paradigm of the evolution and involution of the cosmic forces, the Mandala, as I have said above, shows how the absolute One, by virtue of its own inner drive, articulates itself out into the Many, i.e., the multiplicity of the archetypal configurations of the cosmic forces, and how these various forms return to the One and are reabsorbed into the absolute Unity of being.

The absolute One appears thus to the consciousness as the original point from which all goes forth and also as the ultimate point to which all returns. And this point is metaphysically visualized as the Center of the universe, the universe itself being represented as a whole spatial expanse of the primordial vital energy as it originates in the Center and spreads out in all directions. Thus the universe comes to be visualized as an infinitely large cosmic circle. And the cosmic circle appears as a geometric scheme in which the chaotic confusion of sensory impressions and phenomenal appearances of

the things becomes transformed into a system of archetypes and exemplars symmetrically arranged according to the laws governing the structure of the imaginal dimension of being. The cosmic circle pictured in this way as a diagram is the Mandala.

As will be obvious, what is of decisive importance in the formation of the Mandala is its central point. For it is the starting-point and the ending-point of everything. The entire structure of the Mandala is based upon it. As we have seen above, the Center, in the case of the Mandala as a diagram of the psychic reality, is the zero-point of consciousness which in Confucianism is called the "central equipoise of the not-yet-activated." In the Mandala viewed as a cosmogram, the Center is the metaphysical Urgrund of all things, the zero-point of the universe. As such, and taken in itself, it is "nothing" in the sense that it is the primordial point at which the ontological commotion of things has not yet arisen; there is absolutely nothing visible. It is in reference to this state of affairs that the Confucianists of the Sung dynasty call the zero-point of the universe here in question *wu-chi*, i.e., the ultimate Principle of Non-Being. On the other hand, however, the same Center is the axis (*axis mundi*) round which rotates the unfolding process of the energy of the cosmic life into myriads of things and the infolding process of the same cosmic energy back to its eternal source. With regard to this ontological aspect of the matter, the Center, the zero-point of the universe is known in Confucianism under the name of *t'ai-chi*, i.e., the ultimate Principle of Being. The word *t'ai-chi* actually appears in the book of *I Ching* and, as we shall presently see, plays an exceedingly important role in giving a basic structure to some of the *I Ching* cosmograms.

III

The Mandala is a universal phenomenon. Throughout the long history of humanity the Mandala has appeared in infinitely various individual forms but always with a fundamental inner conformity

and structural identity, and has served at all times and in all places similar purposes in ritual and art forms. It is particularly interesting to observe that the Mandala and mandalic patterns tend to appear wherever and whenever man gives a free rein to the working of the imaginal dimension of his mind and lets the totality of his experience of the world and of himself freely express itself in a pictorial form, even when he is not at all conscious of constructing a Mandala. This fact alone would seem to attest to the universality of the Mandala consciousness as something inherent in the very make-up of man at a certain level of his inner existence.[7]

The universality of the mandalic consciousness, however, does not mean its exclusive domination in the spiritual traditions of the world. Objectively considered, the Mandala, despite its universality and supreme importance, is nothing but one of the outlets for psychic energy. There are other forms in which the psychic reality can express itself. Here I shall take up one of those other forms of the projection or self-expression of the cosmic energy accumulated in the psychic reality, a particular form which is diametrically opposed to the mandalic form. In contrast to the Mandala, I would call it the anti-Mandala. The anti-Mandala is best represented, of all the spiritual traditions in the East, by Zen Buddhism. It would be an interesting thing to examine Zen Buddhism as a typical expression of the anti-mandalic consciousness. For lack of time and space I cannot go into details now. I shall simply say a few words about this problem just in order to clarify by contrast some aspects of the mandalic consciousness which is the main topic of the present paper.

In the tradition of Zen Buddhism, too, there is a well-known custom of drawing a circle. Not only in Chinese Buddhism but more generally in Chinese thought as a whole, the circle is a symbol of utmost perfection. In line with this inborn — we might say —

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[7]Cf. C. G. Jung: *Concerning Mandala Symbolism* (tr. R. F. C. Hull), C. W. 9, I Princeton, 1968, p. 711.

tendency of Chinese thought, Zen masters often give direct expression to their spiritual state by drawing a circle. The circle is in Zen a very important symbol. It is a graphically symbolic presentation of the world of ultimate reality as it is experienced in the depths of the enlightened psyche.

The circle which plays such an important symbolic role in Zen is superficially similar to the Mandala, which, as we have already seen, is also fundamentally a circle except that the underlying spirit is entirely different. Although formally the same, the internal structure of the circular space is different in the two cases.

In the case of the Mandala, the circle is always a delimited space spreading around the central axis. The center is the most important part of the circle, for it is that which determines the whole structure of the latter. The center is, and must always be, clearly visualized as the converging point of the entire vital energy permeating the whole expanse of the space, whether the latter be understood as a visualization of the cosmos in its entirety or a graphic self-expression of the psychic reality as an integral whole.

What is most important to remark about the Mandala-circle in the present context is that the circle as the Mandala-space is divided into a certain number of symmetrical areas and that each one of these sections is occupied by colorful images. The mandalic space is thus a psychic field filled up with archetypal forms of the psychic reality. It is an entirely and completely saturated space.

Quite different from this is the anti-mandalic circle of Zen Buddhism. The circle of Zen is an immediate manifestation of the primordial and primal Void. In contradistinction to the positively saturated space of the Mandala, it may be characterized as a negatively saturated space. The Zen space is not a sheer Void, it is also fully and completely saturated, except that it is negatively saturated. The negative saturation of the Zen space is indicated by the fact that it is a circle, but that the circle has no center. Certainly, as a geometric form, the Zen circle, like any other circle, has and must necessarily have a center. But when I speak of the absence of a center from the

Zen circle, what I mean is that there is no awareness, let alone visualization, of the center. The circle itself is here the ultimate point at which all things are reduced to one, and one is reduced to Nothingness which, however, is, paradoxically enough, immediately all things in the splendor of their phenomenal appearances. The circle in this sense is itself the very center and the center is the All. In such a situation there could possibly be no center imaginable *within* the space of the circle.

The first Patriarch of Zen Buddhism, Bodhidharma, when asked as to the nature of the Absolute Reality, is said to have answered: "Limitlessly lucid and placid, there is absolutely nothing sacred." There is absolutely nothing sacred — that precisely is the "sacred" space of Zen. There is nothing sacred — that is to say, there is no center in this circle. And as long as there is no central point, there could be no Mandala. Zen is through and through anti-mandalic.

Zen has a marked tendency to use paradoxical or seemingly strange expressions in giving vent to its peculiar inner experience. In the present case too, in order to indicate the total absence of a center from the circle, the man of Zen often (particularly in the art of painting and poetry) dislocates the center of a circle from its geometrically proper position and places it awry. Thus, for instance a dot is put in some odd place in the circle away from the position it should occupy as the center of the circle. It is as if the center were dislodged and put by mistake in a wrong place. The point thus decentralized serves the purpose of emphasizing by its presence the absence of all things; it is there for making one aware of the surrounding void, i.e., negatively saturated space. It does not indicate the original point from which all flows out and to which all flows back. In other words, the circle does not constitute a Mandala.

Pictorially or poetically this dislocated center could very well be, for example, the figure of a man, a solitary sage reclining against a rock in a state of deep contemplation on a mountain. A thick mist spreads around the man and totally covers the surrounding landscape; nothing comes into view as far as the eye can reach. The white

blankness into which the forms of all existent things have been absorbed is metaphysically the Nothingness, the absolutely Undifferentiated as Zen understands it. And the absolute Undifferentiated is the center which is itself the whole circle. The center graphically represented and actually experienced in this way cannot evolve toward the exterior, for there is no "exterior" here.

Quite otherwise is the mandalic circle. Here everything starts from a single point, the central point of the cosmos and the psyche whose creative energy spreading out toward the exterior to form a circle around it, heavily loaded with frightening or fascinating images. The result is, as I have earlier said, a positively saturated sacred space which makes a striking contrast with the negative saturation or negative plenum of the anti-mandalic circle of Zen.

Particularly interesting to observe in this respect is the central sphere of the Mandala. The Center, the zero-point of the cosmos and the psychic reality, usually carries a gorgeous image. In one of the most typical forms of Mandala in the Japanese Tantra, the Shingon School of Buddhism, for example, the center of this saturated space-circle is occupied by the dazzlingly brilliant figure of the Vairocana-Buddha, the Buddha the All-Illuminator, who is the ultimate source of the cosmic Light whose rays pervade and permeate the whole space of the circle. The space around the center is replete with figures of Buddha and Bodhisattvas as emanations or self-determinations of the Vairocana-Buddha.

Taken as a whole, the world-view of the *I Ching* is essentially far closer to Tantra than to Zen. The *I Ching* mentality as a "type" may be said to be basically mandalic. In what follows I shall discuss this point through concrete examples.

IV

As I pointed out at the very outset, the interpretation of the *I Ching* by Confucianist thinkers has approached the Mandala-forming state

of consciousness twice in the course of its history: first in the Han dynasty and then in a much conspicuous manner in the Sung dynasty. It was in the Han dynasty that the *I Ching* interpretation gave rise to what is known as the "science of images and numbers." The main ideas of this theory developed under the overwhelming influence of the above-mentioned School of the Yin-Yang and Five Elements. By the word "images" was meant the archetypal images or basic patterns that are noticeable in the working of Nature, ranging from the movements of the heavenly bodies, the cycle of the seasons, the alternation of day and night, the life of human beings and animals, the transformation of lifeless things, etc., when these are observed in terms of the Five Elements: Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Earth. By the word "numbers" was meant the magical numbers attached to the Five Elements and through them to the eight basic trigrams, which resulted in a kind of number symbolism based on a belief in the magical function of certain numbers and certain combinations of numbers.

In such a peculiar context in which the *I Ching* was treated almost exclusively as a book of divination, a sort of mandalic thinking naturally developed around this book. The famous mandalic diagrams known as the *Luo Shu*, the mysterious Writing from the Lo (Luo) River and *Hê T'u*, the Yellow River Diagram, which play an exceedingly important role in the formation of the half-symbolic and half-metaphysical interpretation of the *I Ching* later in the Sung dynasty, belong to the tradition of the magico-symbolic spirituality of the Han dynasty. It must be remarked, however, that these two diagrams, although they are formally mandalic, are not full-fledged Mandalas; at least they were not primarily intended to be Mandalas. Rather, they were originally designed as patterns of number symbolism, namely, "magic squares" in which certain numbers are arranged in a particular way so that they might fully display their inherent magical powers. About these characteristics of the two diagrams more will be said later.

But it was in the Sung dynasty, which came some seven hundred

years after the fall of the Han dynasty, that Confucianism took a remarkable step toward the mandalization of the *I Ching* world-view.

That which afforded an extremely powerful incentive to the general mandalic tendency in the Sung dynasty was the unusual popularity among the thinkers of this age of the diagrammatical presentation of abstract thought. Practically every important system of thought, whether religious, spiritual or philosophical, was diagrammatized. As a result, the intellectual world of the Chinese in that age came to be flooded with diagrams. And interestingly enough, most of these pictures were more or less mandalic in form.

Particularly important and famous as representative of the diagrammatization of the *I Ching* are the following three. (1) The above-mentioned *Luo Shu*, the Writing from the Lo River, and *Hê T'u*, the Yellow River Diagram as presented by Liu Mu (fl. 1023–1041), a Taoist hermit who took special interest in the *I Ching*, (2) The *Hsien T'ien T'u* or the Pre-Heaven Diagram as presented by Shao Yung (1011–1077), a mathematical genius and a great mystic, and (3) The *T'ai Chi T'u* or the Diagram of the ultimate Principle of Being, as elaborated by Chou Lien Hsi (1017–1073), from whose ideas the typical Confucian metaphysics of the Sung dynasty is said to have developed. I shall now examine these three — or, to be more exact, four — famous *I Ching* diagrams in the order just given. My purpose in so doing will mainly be to see in what respect and to what extent each of them can rightly be regarded as an expression of the mandalic consciousness.

V

The first to discuss are the Lo River Writing and Yellow River Diagram. Chu-tzŭ, who believed in the authenticity of the two diagrams, said that Heaven and Earth are speechless and cannot verbally express themselves so that they need the holy sages to appear and speak on their behalf. But, he says, it sometimes happens that Heaven and Earth directly express themselves through their own drawings as in

Yellow River Diagram

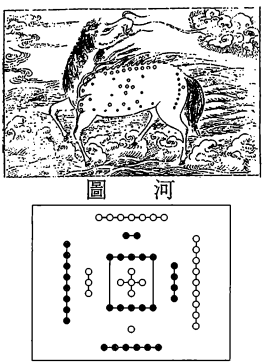

Figure 4

the case of the Lo River Writing and Yellow River Diagram.[8]

Since the two are referred to by name in a number of places in ancient Chinese literature, they must have existed already in the pre-Sung periods. But nobody knows exactly in what form they existed.

The *I Ching* itself mentions them in an important passage of one of the Ten Wings belonging to the fourth stratum as I have explained earlier.[9] It reads: "The Yellow River brought forth a diagram, and the Lo River brought forth a writing. And the holy sage produced the symbols in accordance with them." A widely accepted tradition asserts that the holy sage here in question was Fu Hsi, the legendary first king of China, while the "symbols" devised by him are in this context evidently the eight trigrams.

In the Han dynasty the Lo River Writing and Yellow River Diagram became very popular and were much discussed. And the former came to be known as the Tortoise Writing, the idea being that the mysterious writing emerged in primeval times out of the River Lo on the back of a sacred tortoise, whereas the latter was named the

[8]Chu-tzŭ: *Ch'üan Shu* XXVI.

[9]*Hsi Tz'ŭ Chuan*, Part I. On this Commentary see above, Section I.

Dragon Diagram, the idea being that a dragon-horse appeared from the Yellow River carrying on his body the mysterious diagram. In truth, however, the Lo River Writing and Yellow River Diagram were presented in the graphic forms as we know them today only in the Sung dynasty, in the eleventh century A.D.

The question now is: Are these two diagrams really Mandalas? As a concrete example, let us examine more closely the Lo River Writing.

As it stands in this form, the Lo River Writing (Figure 5) shows in

Lo River Writing

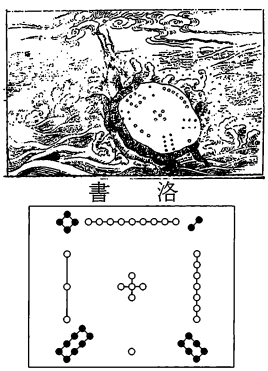

Figure 5

its formal structure itself something which renders it worthy to be regarded as a Mandala or at least a mandalic pattern. But the main concern of this diagram was with number mysticism expressed through a particular arrangement of numbers known in mathematics as a magic square. In regard to this I would draw attention to the fact that the original idea of this diagram was derived from the so-called "Nine Chamber Diagram" which had been much discussed in the Han dynasty as the standard model on which to build the *ming t'ang*. The *ming t'ang* was the imperial palace specially built for the purpose of the emperor performing his duties concerning the annual official events, political as well as religious. Reduced to a simple pattern, a *ming t'ang* consists of a large square divided into nine sections or nine

chambers with four gates facing the four cardinal points (Figure 6).

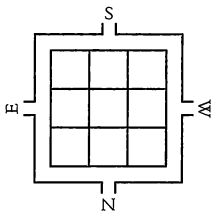

Figure 6

It will be interesting to observe that this in itself has evidently a mandalic structure. But those who devised this model were almost exclusively interested in the magical function of numbers. Thus to each of these nine chambers of the palace, was attributed a definite number from the number series 1–9 in such a way that as a result a peculiar arrangement was obtained, in which every row of three numbers — horizontal, vertical and diagonal — has the number value of 15. This is nothing other than a magic square (Figure 7). And this

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

Figure 7

particular arrangement of numbers is exactly what is graphically reproduced in the Lo River Diagram.

We must add, however, that already in the Han dynasty the eight trigrams of the *I Ching* were distributed to these chambers one by one except the Center, so that each of the eight trigrams obtained a definite numerical value (Figure 8). It is further to be observed that

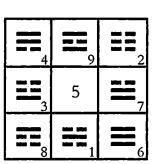

Figure 8

this disposition of the trigrams follows exactly the description of the trigrams given in the *I Ching* in one of the Ten Wings, called the *Shuo Kua Chuan*, or the Discussion of the Trigrams.

If, with this understanding, we remake the Lo River Writing, giving special prominence to the eight trigrams and indicating their positions in terms of the cardinal directions, the seasons of the year, and the Five Elements, we shall naturally end up by constructing an *I Ching* Mandala at the stage of the trigrams before the whole thing spreads further out onto the stage of the sixty-four hexagrams (Figure 9). Seen in this light, it will be clear that the Lo River Writing is, implicitly at least, a Mandala.

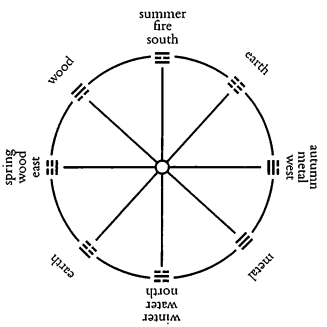

Figure 9

It would be possible to consider the Yellow River Diagram (Figure 4) in a similar way, which I shall not do now for lack of time. Besides it would be rather superfluous for our present purposes. I shall end this section by simply drawing your attention to the fact that Carl Gustav Jung treats this diagram (which he calls the River Map) as an authentic *I Ching* Mandala and analyzes its basic, mandalic structure in some detail.[10]

VI

Now we turn to the Pre-Heaven Diagram devised by Shao Yung. He

[10]C. G. Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

presented his newly devised diagram under the name of Pre-Heaven Diagram in contradistinction to what he called the Post-Heaven Diagram. The Post-Heaven Diagram is precisely the Mandala which we have just examined, namely the Mandala derived from the Lo River Writing and which, as I have pointed out, is structured in strict accordance with an explanation of the eight trigrams found in the *I Ching* itself.

The Lo River Mandala — or as Shao Yung calls it, the Post-Heaven Diagram — is, as we have seen, constructed on a special disposition of numbers known as a magic square. Shao Yung, being a master of number mysticism, is equally interested in the magic square. So in designing his new diagram he leaves intact the original disposition of the numbers, but changes the arrangement of the trigrams to be associated with the numbers in the way illustrated below (Figure 10).[11]

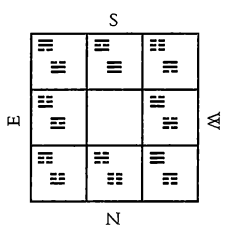

Figure 10

Thus the same magic square now charged with a new symbolic meaning naturally developed into a new *I Ching* Mandala (Figure 11), the internal structure of which has very important philosophical implications as we are going to see.

The Post-Heaven, as I have just pointed out, is based on what is found in a celebrated passage of the book of *I Ching*, in which the sequential relationship between the eight trigrams is explained. The beginning-point of all things is placed in the East. The East is indicated by the trigram Chên ☳ whose archetypal image is Thunder.

[11]In each of the nine squares, the trigram in the upper left corner is the one which occupied that position in the Lo River Mandala.

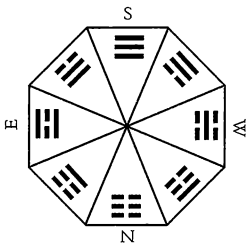

Figure 11

The Thunder symbolizes movement, or rather, strong vibration by which the Creator arouses all things into being. The corresponding time of the day is dawn, and its season is the spring, the time of blossoming and the beginning of growth and expansion.

Next comes the trigram Hsün or Sun ☴ whose archetypal image is Wind. Its position is in the South-East; and the time is the forenoon, and the season the period between spring and summer. At this stage the Creator puts every thing in its proper place and thus brings order out of the initial state of chaos.

Next is the trigram Li ☲ whose archetypal image is Fire symbolizing both heat and bright light. It is in the South. Its time is midday, the season summer. At this stage the Creator lets all things freely grow up, so that, as a result, they manifest themselves to each other as if enjoying their own glories.

The fourth is the trigram K'un ☷, whose archetypal image is Earth. It is in the South-West; the time is the afternoon, the season late summer. Here the Creator entrusts the Earth with the task of nurturing the things.

In the West stands the trigram Tui ☱, whose archetypal image is Marsh or Lake and its intrinsic quality is joyfulness. The time of the day is the calm, serene evening, and the season is midautumn, the time of ripening. All things at this stage are joyous.

The sixth is the trigram Ch'ien ☰ whose archetypal image is Heaven. In terms of the day it is the time near midnight, and in terms

of the season it is between autumn and winter. It is in the North-West. The North-West is a Yin direction while the Ch'ien itself is pure Yang. It is consequently the stage at which the Yin and Yang forces fight against each other.

The seventh is the trigram K'an ☵, Water. It is in the North. The time is midnight, the season midwinter. At this stage all things toil and struggle prior to ultimately going back to the place of rest.

The last in order is the trigram Kên ☶, the Mountain, whose symbolic quality is standing-still. Its position is in the North-East. In terms of the day it is the time between the night and the morning. In terms of the season it is between winter and spring. At this stage all things are brought to perfection, i.e., the end or death, but only to be reborn at the following stage.

It will be clear that the Post-Heaven Diagram depicts in the dimension of symbolic imagination the perpetual, never-ending cyclic process of the alternation of the eight cosmic forces, which is also the process by which all things come into being, grow up, mature and finally decay and die. In other words, the Post-Heaven is a symbolic picture of the eight trigrams at work; it shows how the cosmic forces symbolized by the trigrams actually operate in the world of being. Such was also Shao Yung's opinion about this diagram.

But, Shao Yung thought, the trigrams can work the way they do in the physical dimension of being only because each of them has its own essential nature established in the ideal, or purely conceptual, dimension of being. That is to say, the Post-Heaven Diagram presupposes another diagram graphically reproducing the essences of the eight cosmic forces in their mutual relations. Thus Shao Yung devised a new diagram. Translating the metaphysical or essential anteriority in terms of temporal or historical anteriority, he attributed his own invention to the prehistoric, legendary King Fu Hsi and named it Pre-Heaven Diagram in distinction from the previous diagram which he named Post-Heaven Diagram and which he ascribed to King Wên of the Chou dynasty. The idea behind this peculiar naming —

the *Pre-Heaven* Diagram — is that his new diagram is the visualization of the essential order and arrangement of the eight trigrams (supposed to have been invented by Fu Hsi) in strict accordance with the eternal Law of Nature that has been there since the time before the appearance of Heaven and Earth.

As I have suggested before, the Pre-Heaven Diagram of Shao Yung has a very remarkable philosophical significance. For the philosophical principle of this diagram is exactly the most fundamental idea dominating the whole structure of the philosophical world-view of the *I Ching* as expressed through the eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams. That principle is the essential complementarity of two opposite forces. It concerns the attraction-repulsion relationship between two opposites. The idea is that wherever and whenever two forces, whether cosmic or psychic, meet and stand in diametrical opposition to one another, there necessarily arises between them a tension situation, i.e., an energy-field arising from their mutual repulsion and attraction.

With regard to this attraction-repulsion relationship between two opposites, it is remarkable that the whole *I Ching* is permeated through and through with the idea that two opposite things, whatever they may be, attract each other precisely because they are opposite. The cosmic opposition of the Yin and Yang itself would be meaningless and effectless if it were not for this apparently self-contradictory nature of the principle of opposition.

Thus the *I Ching* sees the universe as a complicated system of many different fields of opposition, all of which are particularized manifestations of the most fundamental opposition — that of the two cosmic forces, Yin and Yang. The universe in this view is a harmonious whole standing on the basis of various forms of polar tension on various levels of the actualization of the Yin-Yang opposition. And all these fields of polar tension are brought into a cosmic state of equilibrium because of the harmonizing tendency which, as we have just seen, is inherent in the very principle of Opposition. Quite naturally the *I Ching* symbolically reproduces this state of

affairs through different combinations of the Yin and Yang lines.

It is the universe viewed in such a light that the Pre-Heaven Diagram seeks to visualize by means of a particular arrangement of the archetypal images traditionally associated with the eight trigrams. We must add as a remarkable fact about this diagram that it is a picture not only of the outer, i.e., material and physical, world, but also of the inner universe, i.e., the world of psychic reality. It is, in other words, a psychocosmogram.

With these preliminary remarks in mind, let us now examine more closely the structure of the Pre-Heaven Diagram. Shao Yung devised this psychocosmogram on the basis of a passage of the *I Ching* (*Shuo Kua Chuan*), in which the eight forces — which are symbolized by the eight trigrams and which could and indeed must be understood as cosmic as well as psychic energies — are viewed as actually forming four pairs of complementary opposition. Thus Thunder and Wind (☳ ☴), Water and Fire (☵ ☲), Mountain and Marsh (☶ ☱), Heaven and Earth (☰ ☷) are regarded as constituting each a pair of opposites. The Pre-Heaven Diagram graphically reproduces this situation. It consists of four zones, each of which represents a particular field of energy that naturally forms itself between the two opposing forces acting negatively and positively, i.e., repelling and attracting each other, at one and the same time. It is important to remark that all these pairs of opposite forces are brought into equilibrium only at and through the Center (Figure 12). This is the significance of the Center which I explained in the earlier part of

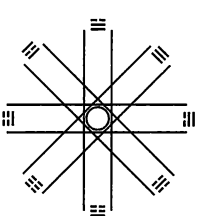

Figure 12

this paper.

As will be easily seen, in the Pre-Heaven Diagram each of these four pairs of opposite trigrams is so arranged that in every case the two opposites directly face one another across an energy field which they produce between themselves. And the negative aspect of their relationship — that is, the mutual repulsion — is graphically indicated by their being mutually inverse. This means that all the three lines of the paired trigrams are completely opposite to one another in terms of Yin and Yang in such a way that if, for example, the lowest line in one of the trigrams happens to be Yin, the lowest line of the other trigram is invariably Yang, and *vice versa* (Figure 13).

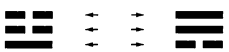

Figure 13

The positive aspect of their relationship, on the contrary — that is the mutual attraction — is indicated by the fact that the two trigrams are intimately connected with each other by their being each visually an after-image of the other. And this fundamental structure would remain completely intact if we are to develop and enlarge the octagon of the eight trigrams and let all the sixty-four hexagrams spread out around it. On that level, the sixty-four hexagrams would form among themselves thirty-two pairs of opposite hexagrams, the paired hexagrams standing always face to face and forming between themselves a particular field of polar tension, whether cosmic or psychic. It is this inherent nature of the sixty-four hexagrams that provides the formal symmetry which, as we observed at the outset, is one of the essential conditions of Mandala formation. And if to this we add another important observation that the seemingly abstract and imageless world of the hexagrams is in reality a world of swarming images as suggested by the textual comments on them which we find in the book of *I Ching*, we shall have to recognize in the Pre-Heaven Diagram an authentic *I Ching* Mandala.

VII

The last to consider is the so-called T'ai Chi Diagram[12] of Chou Lien Hsi. Of all the three (or four) *I Ching* diagrams discussed in this paper it is apparently the least mandalic in its formal make-up. In fact, according to Chu-tzŭ, the Lo River Writing and Yellow River Diagram are representative of the mystical and symbolic aspect of the *I Ching* while the T'ai Chi Diagram is a graphic presentation of its metaphysical-ontological aspect. This observation whose truth no one can doubt, will naturally be taken to suggest the non-mandalic nature of the T'ai Chi Diagram. A closer examination will show, however, that even this diagram has in its philosophical structure something profoundly mandalic.

Let us first cast a glance at the outward form of this diagram consisting of five successive stages vertically disposed (Figure 14). It begins with a totally blank circle. It symbolizes primarily the ultimate Principle of Non-Being (*wu chi*) which we discussed earlier. It is the absolute Reality in its absoluteness, i.e., the ultimate Reality in its metaphysical undifferentiation or indetermination.

But, as we already know, the undifferentiated conceals within itself an ontological proclivity toward self-differentiation or self-determination. In reference to this positive aspect of it the same absolute Reality is called *t'ai chi*, the ultimate Principle of Being, meaning the metaphysical Ground of all things and the ultimate origin from which all things emanate. The ontological emanation of all things is nothing other than the self-transformation of the *t'ai chi* itself.

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[12]The origin of this diagram has been and still is much discussed. According to some, it is of Taoist origin, while others ascribe it to a Buddhist hermit. And there are a number of variant forms. The question, however, is irrelevant to the main topic of the present paper. In any case, the T'ai Chi Diagram shown here is philosophically the most important and most famous, for it is the one presented by Chu-tzŭ, who also wrote a short but remarkable commentary upon it.

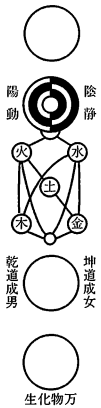

Figure 14

The initial stage of this self-transforming process of the *t'ai chi* is graphically reproduced in the second circle showing the alternation of Yin and Yang.[13]

This second stage of the T'ai Chi Diagram, represented by a circle consisting of four concentric circles is designed to show graphically the progression of Yin zones and Yang zones from the center, alternating one with another. The small circle at the center symbolizes the *wu chi*, the ultimate Principle of Non-Being. But, it is at this stage no longer pure *wu chi*; it is already involved in its own *t'ai chi* activity.

As Yin and Yang go on alternating, they mix and combine in various degrees. They thereby lose their original purity as the pure Yin and pure Yang, and become transformed into Five Elements whose dynamic relationship with one another is visualized in the T'ai Chi Diagram as its third stage. On the basis of an idea inherited from the Han dynasty Confucianism, the Five Elements are shown here to be productive of one another in a definite order (Figure 15). Water produces Wood; Wood produces Fire; Fire produces Earth; Earth produces Metal; Metal produces Water, so that the process of mutual production goes on indefinitely in a perpetual cyclic movement.

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[13]Cf. *Hsi Tz'ŭ Chuan*, Part I.

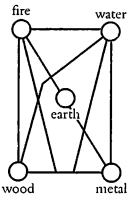


Figure 15

And by the cyclic movement of the Five Elements, the four seasons succeed one another, the four cardinal points and the center are determined, and the world of Nature is actualized.

The next stage in the diagram represents the birth of the animal world with human beings at its highest and central point. Here the original Yang and Yin are found active in the form of the two animal principles, the Male (the left side) and Female (the right side).

The last, the fifth is the stage of physical reality. As the final limit of the cosmic evolution of the *t'ai chi*, it represents the ontological dimension of concrete individual things, animate and inanimate. The phenomenal world is there, with its dazzling floweriness of infinite colors and forms. But all these things are transient. Everything changes. But "change" at this stage can only mean going back, for there is no further place for the things to go. The process of evolution has come to an end. The process of the ontological Return starts, and everything goes back to the original state of Non-Being, the *wu chi*. In truth, however, the things need not *go* back. For in a certain sense they are already back there. And this is because every thing is an ontological modification of the *wu chi* itself; every thing *is* the *wu chi*. The T'ai Chi Diagram visualizes this metaphysical, a-temporal nature of all things in the physical dimension of being by symbolizing the last stage with a circle — exactly the same blank circle by which it symbolizes the *wu chi* itself.

I started this section by remarking that the T'ai Chi Diagram is the least mandalic of all representative *I Ching* diagrams. In fact, it is evidently not presented in a form even reminding of a Mandala.

However, if we observe its internal structure, as we have just done, as a diagrammatic reflection of the universal process of the diastole and systole, or the evolution of the cosmic forces from their primordial origin and their involution back to the same ultimate point, we shall immediately become aware of the existence of a real mandalic potential contained within the diagram.

The mandalic potential here in question will come out more clearly into view if we superpose the T'ai Chi Diagram upon a more basic Yin-Yang scheme of the *I Ching* in such a way that the latter be visible, as it were, through the transparent screen of the former. By thus seeing the two diagrams at one and the same time and reading their basic ideas into one another, we shall, I think, be able to plumb the philosophical depth of the Yin-Yang world-view of the *I Ching*.

The Ying-Yang scheme of the *I Ching* underlying the T'ai Chi Diagram is based on a short but extremely important statement found in the book of *I Ching*.[14] It begins as follows: "The universal Change (the *i*) has the *t'ai chi*." It means that the process of the cosmic transformation — which is precisely what the *I Ching* is primarily concerned with — has its beginning-point in the absolute metaphysical dimension of Reality called *t'ai chi*, the ultimate Principle of Being. It will be recalled that the T'ai Chi Diagram recognizes a metaphysical stage lying even beyond the *t'ai chi* and graphically places it above the latter, calling it the *wu chi*, the ultimate Principle of Non-Being. According to Chou Lien Hsi — or rather, according to the interpretation given by Chu-tzŭ — this is based on the idea that the *t'ai chi* represents the primal point of both the cosmos and consciousness as the positive, active, and creative aspect of Reality, i.e., the absolute Reality in movement, but that the movement presupposes a negative locus in which alone is it able to be actualized. In other words, the creative, transformative movement of Reality, i.e., the Change, originates in a state of Stillness which is nothing other than the negative aspect of its own self, which is structurally, if not

[14] *Ibid.*

temporally, prior to its own positive aspect. All movements, whether of the cosmos or of the mind, start from the primordial point of Stillness. The point of Stillness is the *wu chi*.

Metaphysically the *wu chi* is a complete Void, the state of Nothingness. It is the absolutely undifferentiated state of the ultimate Reality. It is the Undifferentiated. Nothing can be said to exist at this stage, for the Reality has not yet articulated itself. It cannot even be said to be the source of ontological articulation. For it is a metaphysical state in which no sign is observable even of the primal articulation of Reality into Yin and Yang.

Correspondingly the mind is also in a state of absolute stillness. It is a state in which all internal commotions have subsided. The consciousness has returned to its zero-point, the *wei-fa*. In the characteristic terminology of the "Book of the Mean," it is the state of *chung*, the Middle, the middle point of the psyche. There is absolutely no consciousness of anything whatsoever — no emotion, no perception, no thought, and no image. There is, in short, no consciousness. As the whole universe has been reabsorbed into the original Nothingness, the consciousness, too, has sunken into Nothingness.

In order that there be consciousness and the things as its objects, there must be a moment at which the Reality turns from the *wu chi* into the state of *t'ai chi*. It is a decisive, metaphysical moment, although the *T'ai Chi Diagram* indicates the emergence of this moment by simply putting the *t'ai chi* circle under the *wu chi* circle. But the drastic difference between these two aspects of the ultimate Reality is visualized by the *t'ai chi* circle being shown as already internally articulated in terms of Yin and Yang. As such the *t'ai chi* is the beginning-point of the world of Being. And, as we have already observed, it is also the exact point from which the world-view of the *I Ching* itself takes its start.

The *t'ai chi* is the primal source of all things, the metaphysical Ground of being. In the technical terminology of the Confucian philosophy of the Sung dynasty, it is the absolute *li*, the eternal unchanging Essence prior to being articulated into the particular *li* (the

particular essences) of the individual things. Thus these individual essences are all particularized forms of the one absolute *li*. The *t'ai chi* in this sense is the metaphysical Unity of all things. And the mind which has been elevated to this stage through the discipline of "quiet sitting" and the "investigation of the *li* of all things" becomes directly conscious of this Unity — or rather we should say — *is* the Unity. For strictly speaking, the mind cannot be *conscious of* the Unity, because such an act of the mind would immediately turn the "unity" into "duality" consisting of the mind and the Unity. Rather, the consciousness is identical and completely at one with the Unity itself. According to Sung Confucianists, this unification of consciousness and the metaphysical Essence of things is to be realized only through a special enlightenment experience which they call the "sudden breakthrough" (*t'o jan kuan t'ung*).

But the *I Ching* text which we have started to read continues. It says: "It (i.e., the *t'ai chi*) produces (i.e., articulates itself into) the two primary Exemplars." The two Exemplars are the two cosmic forces Yin and Yang. They are the basic "exemplars" on which is modeled the formation of the universe. All things in the world are regarded in the *I Ching* as combinations and mixtures of these two cosmic forces in varying degrees and forms. This means that at the very first stage of its creative transformation, the *t'ai chi* polarizes into Yin and Yang. And the mind at this stage recognizes this Yin-Yang polarity everywhere and in every thing in the world. For, variously combined, the Yin and Yang provide every individual thing with its *li*.

The *I Ching* text still continues: "The two Exemplars produce (i.e., transform into) the four Figures and the four Figures produce (i.e., transform into) the eight trigrams." The "four Figures" are the four mathematically possible combinations of the two lines, Yin and Yang. On the Yang side appear two Figures: the Great Yang (*t'ai yang* ⚌) and Little Yin (*shao yin* ⚎), while on the Yin side the Great Yin (*t'ai yin* ⚏) and Little Yang (*shao yang* ⚍).[15]

As to the mutual relationship of these four Figures, a clear idea may be obtained by considering it in the following way. The Yin and Yang are usually treated graphically as well as conceptually as two different and independent units. This conception, however, is not strictly correct. The right view is rather that they form a continuum to be properly imaged as a single line extending between the pure Yang and the pure Yin as its two extreme limits.

The whole line may conveniently be divided into the Yang section and the Yin section, the two sections meeting at the middle point of the line. The Yang force which is at its height of actualization at the extreme limit of the Yang section gradually decreases until when it reaches the middle point it becomes weakest or null. And at that very moment it transforms itself into the weakest Yin which constitutes the starting-point of the Yin section. The Yin force thus activated gradually increases until it attains to the extreme limit of development.

Yin ——————|—————— Yang

Thus the Little Yin is in reality a state of the Yang force which has considerably weakened and which has to that extent approached the Yin. Similarly the Little Yang is the Yin force in which there still remains some amount of the Yang element before the Yin reaches its full actualization (Figure 16). All this would seem to indicate that the

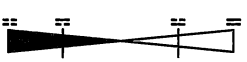


Figure 16

[15]These appellations: Great (or old) Yang, Little (or young) Yang, Great (or old) Yin, Little (or young) Yin, are not found in any of the historical strata of the text of the *I Ching*; that is to say, they are of later origin. Besides, in the course of history a somewhat confusing situation has come up concerning the Little Yang and Little Yin. For some scholars have called ⚌ Little Yang, and ⚍ Little Yin. Here I follow the tradition established by Chu-tzŭ.

distinction between Yin and Yang is after all a matter of degrees; that the absolutely pure Yin and the absolutely pure Yang are possible to exist only ideally and theoretically; and that in actuality every concrete manifestation of the Yang contains within itself some amount, be it the minimum amount, of Yin element, and *vice versa.*

The four Figures whose inner structure I have just explained, transform into the eight trigrams which constitute the next stage in the Yin-Yang scheme of the *I Ching.* As has already been elucidated, the eight trigrams provide the eight archetypal images in terms of which the mind becomes conscious of the orderly arrangement of all things in the world. The system of the trigrams represents the primary articulation of the non-articulated Reality peculiar to the metaphysics of the *I Ching.* The *I Ching* says:[16] "The eight trigrams arrange themselves in order, and the (archetypal) images of all things are already there." And the *I Ching* itself explains the meaning of this statement in another passage[17] saying: "The sage (who devised the Yin-Yang scheme of the *I Ching*) saw the chaotic diversities of the things under Heaven. So he set up a certain number of basic patterns and similitudes and symbolically presented an orderly picture of the things. It is for this reason that (these patterns) are called symbolic Images."

The philosophical meaning of this statement may be explicated in the following way. The phenomenal or physical reality as it directly strikes our sense organs is nothing but chaos. The things at this stage present themselves as an infinitely complicated, confused and disorderly jumble of sensory impressions. But in the view of a holy sage, i.e., when the reality is looked at with the metaphysical eye of an enlightened mind, there are observable a certain number of basic patterns and forms spontaneously emerging out of the chaos. And on the basis of these patterns and forms the chaotic reality can properly

[16] *Hsi Tz'ŭ Chuan*, Part II.
[17] *Ibid.*, Part I.

be articulated and thereby represented as an integral whole. These basic ontological patterns of things are in themselves invisible but they could be converted into visible symbols. According to the passage just quoted of the *I Ching*, the eight trigrams have primarily been established as the visible symbols of the invisible patterns of the things. And the same applies to the sixty-four hexagrams which are nothing other than formal extensions of the eight trigrams, except that at the hexagrammatic stage the symbols have become more complicated, that is to say, more finely articulated and consequently a degree closer to the state of reality experienced in the dimension of sensory impressions.

The Yin-Yang scheme beginning with the *t'ai chi* and provisionally ending at the stage of the eight trigrams whose inner structure has just been explained, is customarily given as an abstract system of various combinations of the Yin and Yang lines (Figure 17). The *t'ai chi*, the origin and basis of the whole system, is put at the bottom, and the subsequent stages are placed one above another, showing in a graphic manner how the primordial Reality spreads out into more complicated combinations of the Yin and Yang forces.

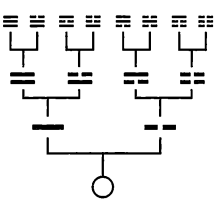


Figure 17

It goes without saying that the cosmic evolution of Reality still continues to proceed stage after stage until it reaches the level of the sixty-four hexagrams as shown in the diagram given in figure 18. Even the level of the hexagrams is not the final end of the evolving process. In fact it can go on indefinitely. But the *I Ching* obviously considers it useless to complicate further the symbols, and stops at

this stage.

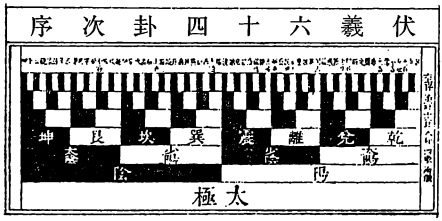


Figure 18

Considered in this way, the mandalic nature of the Yin-Yang scheme will be evident. It will come out in clearer view if we re-form this diagram into a circle with the *t'ai chi* as its center. What is thereby obtained is a Mandala, a perfect *I Ching* Mandala (Figure 19).

Figure 19

Is this, however, a mandalization of the T'ai Chi Diagram devised by Chou Lien Hsi? Evidently not. Presented in this form, this Mandala is exactly what was already prefigured by Shao Yung's Pre-Heaven Diagram. It is rather a work to be ascribed to Shao Yung instead of Chou Lien Hsi. And in this respect, what I have explained in the present section concerning the Yin-Yang scheme of the *I Ching* will more rightly be considered an explication of another — metaphysico-ontological — aspect of the Pre-Heaven Diagram, that remained latent and unclarified in our description of the formation of that diagram.

However, the T'ai Chi Diagram is a philosophical work based on

the same Yin-Yang scheme of the *I Ching*. As such it could surely be mandalized along similar lines, and the result will be an *I Ching* Mandala with the same basic Yin-Yang scheme, which, however, will naturally be modified to a considerable extent by metaphysical-ontological ideas peculiar to the T'ai Chi Diagram. How will it, then, look like concretely? That still remains unknown. For a complete mandalization of the T'ai Chi Diagram is something yet to come. One thing, however, is clear — namely, that the Mandala will have as its center the Void or Nothingness. And this is clear from the fact that the whole system of the T'ai Chi Diagram takes its start from the *wu chi*, the ultimate Principle of Non-Being. By the introduction of this concept, the *I Ching* Mandala — whatever its actual form may be — will have as its Center the zero-point of consciousness which, as we already know, is also the zero-point of the universe. And only thus will the *I Ching* Mandala be produced as a real psychocosmogram graphically representing the cosmic and psychic process of evolution and involution, from the absolute One to the Phenomenal Many and from the Many back to the One. And this psychocosmogram would present a striking contrast to the Tantric Mandala in which the central area is occupied by a glorious image of the Buddha.

THE FIELD STRUCTURE OF TIME IN ZEN BUDDHISM

ERANOS 47
(1978)

I

From the most remote antiquity, everywhere in the world, man has always been seriously concerned with the problem of time at different levels of existence and in various domains of life. This would seem to indicate that time can or must be approached from various angles. Of all the possible approaches to time, I shall take up here the philosophical one. I shall, in other words, deal with the Buddhist concept of time as a problem of the philosophy of time. In point of fact, the real seriousness of the problem of time seems to come out in the most conspicuous manner in religion and philosophy. Both religiously and philosophically, time, no doubt, is one of the most important and indeed most baffling problems man has raised about the world in which he lives, about the things by which he finds himself surrounded, about his own destiny, and about his very existence.

Various answers have been given by different systems of religion and philosophy to the most basic question: What is time? The structure of time has been variously analyzed. Zen Buddhism, too, as a school of religion and philosophy is naturally expected to have its own answer to the same question.

How, then, does Zen Buddhism conceive of time? Or how does

The theme of Eranos 47 (1978), that is, the 47th Eranos Conference Yearbook, which is the compilation of lectures given at the Eranos Conference in 1978, was "Zeit und Zeitlosigkeit — In Time and Out of Time — Le temps et ses frontières."

Zen experience time? What is the fundamental structure of time and time-consciousness according to Zen? This is the topic of my talk today which I have chosen for myself in accordance with the general theme of the Eranos meeting for this year: "In Time and out of Time," or time and timelessness.

Time and timelessness — the most tricky part of the whole thing seems to lie in the word "timelessness." In fact, whenever one talks about Zen one thinks of Nothingness. Nothingness, in terms of time, would mean no-time or timelessness. Is, then, the experience of reality in Zen Buddhism an experience of timelessness or going out of time? The matter does not seem to be so simple. Not only with regard to Zen, but more generally one often uses expressions such as "timelessness," "timeless reality," "going beyond time," "beyond time and space," and the like, in talking about religious, metaphysical, and especially mystical experiences. Mystics themselves often describe their own experience as "going beyond time," "the tasting of the timeless," etc. Eternity is often taken in this sense. That may be right. For it is undeniable that when one has sunken deep into meditation, one loses consciousness of time. Such a state may very well be described as being timeless. But timelessness in this sense, namely, the loss of time-consciousness, is in itself nothing so extraordinary. For a man who has fallen into a swoon may also be said to be in a state of timelessness in the sense that he has lost consciousness of time. It is, further, a matter of daily experience that when we are involved heart and soul in work or even a game, we become unaware of the lapse of time. This evidently is also a case in which time-consciousness is lost.

Is the loss of time-consciousness or oblivion of time really an experience of timelessness? Does it mean that one has really gone beyond time? Buddhism expresses grave doubts about it. In its view, it is not altogether an easy matter to go beyond time. Rather, it is an impossibility. One may lose consciousness of time in contemplation as in a state of torpor, but that kind of experience must strictly be distinguished from timelessness or going beyond time, unless one

simply decides to call the loss of time-consciousness timelessness. To do so, however, is highly misleading, especially from the religious and philosophical standpoint which Buddhism represents. In the view of Buddhism, one talks about timelessness too easily and too lightly. It is, to say the least, a mistake to simplify the matter to that extent, for that kind of simplification is liable to make one lose contact with time as it really is and thereby distort the picture of psychic reality whose nature is deeply temporal.

According to Buddhism, it is, to begin with, impossible for man to "go beyond time" in the real sense, as long as he *exists*. For existence, whether of man or of things, is essentially connected with time. Nothing can exist except in time. Existence is deeply and inextricably involved in time. Or, as we shall see later, existence itself *is* time.

Buddhism does not try to go beyond time. What it is interested to do is rather to transform the way we experience time. Instead of eliminating time — which Buddhism says is an impossibility as long as man exists — it proposes a new way of experiencing time, quite different from ordinary cognitive experience. Nothing is to be eliminated from the world as we know it in our ordinary life. All the things must remain there as they have been. Time also must continue to be present to us. The only thing that really matters is that we should learn to look at the things and time in a totally new light, that we should activate a peculiar faculty of metaphysical sight which lies dormant within us in a state of potentiality, so that an entirely new vista might be opened up of the world of being and the things in the world as they reveal the profound reality of their existence *as* time. What is important is solely that our vision of time should completely be transformed. All this, however, is possible, according to Buddhism, not by "going beyond time," but rather by delving deeply into the reality of time and bringing about a total transformation of our time-consciousness. This is the main problem I would like to discuss in the present paper.

I shall begin by pointing out that the kind of transformation of

time-consciousness I have just spoken of can be brought about only through a transformation of the very make-up of consciousness itself. But it is one of the most fundamental tenets of Buddhism in general that a transformation of consciousness in its entirety and in its essential mode of being is to be brought about only by a systematic training of the mind through contemplation. Contemplation is the sole means recognized of methodical transformation of consciousness leading toward the actualization of an inner state in which the things disclose their metaphysical and ontological reality that remains hidden from the ordinary eye.

Contemplation in a Buddhist context, however, must not be directly identified (or confused) with a transcendental experience of metaphysical nothingness or timelessness. This is indicated by the very phrase technically used for contemplation in Sanskrit, namely *śamatha-vipaśyanā*. *Śamatha* literally means stopping, keeping still and quiet. It refers to the discipline of calming down the superficial agitations of the mind, whether sensory, emotive or cogitative, and keeping it in a state of stillness thus actualized. *Vipaśyanā* (or *vipaśyana*), on the other hand, means viewing (*paśyanā*) things in detail or in distinction (*vi*), that is to say, seeing or cognizing all things distinctively, each in its individual reality. Contemplation thus understood is realized in the most typical form in what is known as the *hai-yin san-mei* in Chinese and *sāgara-mudrā-samādhi* in Sanskrit, meaning literally Ocean-Imprint-Contemplation, which in fact represents the highest form of contemplation in Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Buddha is said to have been in this state when he revealed to his disciples the secrets of the deepest reality of the things in the world, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (*Hua Yen*) Sūtra being allegedly the record of the words which he uttered at that time.

The Ocean-Imprint-Contemplation, as this appellation itself suggests, compares the state of the mind in contemplation to the limitless expanse of a deep ocean remaining completely calm and tranquil, whose unruffled, lucid surface reflects, like a spotlessly clean mirror, the images of all things in the universe. Not a wave, not even a ripple

disturbs the serene limpidity of the water. And all things are reflected in it without suffering the slightest distortion. They all appear there as they truly are, each manifesting its natural, primordial reality. As is obvious, this type of contemplation is radically different from, or rather the exact opposite of, the contemplation of Nothingness, in which absolutely nothing remains in the field of vision.

In fact, of all the authentic types of contemplation recognized as such in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Ocean-Imprint-Contemplation is the most ontological in that it reveals the things against the background of the One, instead of concealing them behind the veil of the One as some forms of contemplation do. All things, far from dissolving into the nothingness of metaphysical undifferentiation, stand out clearly, each showing its own ontological delineation. Hua Yen philosophy whose ontology is based exactly on this kind of experience, describes the state of affairs here observable by saying that all things are in the state of deep *samādhi*. Not only is the mind in *samādhi*, but the things as they manifest themselves to the mind are in *samādhi*. And it is important to remark that this kind of *samādhi* is not without an internal relation with time, that, rather, it is a very peculiar form of time-experience.

At first glance, and superficially observed, the Ocean-Imprint-Contemplation might seem to consist in an experience of timelessness. One might imagine that one is in the region of timeless reality, all things eternally maintaining themselves in a state of timelessness. For no movement is observable here. A profound stillness reigns over the ocean. Nothing moves. Time would seem to have come to a sudden stop. There is no time. For, as we shall see, where there is no movement there is no time, there can be no time.

We must remark, however, that the stillness which reigns over the whole world of being as experienced in the Ocean-Imprint-Contemplation is the stillness of *totum simul* the "simultaneous manifestation of all things," i.e., the whole of the things past, present and future, having been metaphysically actualized all together at one stroke, all things presenting themselves in a state of universal actualization

on what I would call the metaphysical plane of a-temporality. I am here using the word "a-temporality" in order to designate the very peculiar temporal situation brought about by the simultaneous actualization of all things, in distinction from sheer non-temporality. Certainly the *totum simul* is non-temporal in the sense that there is observable in this metaphysical state no temporal flow of things. However, the whole of the things, past, present and future, actualized all together and all at once, constitute a particular "field" naturally charged with a high degree of ontological tension which is pulsating with an inner temporality. For the a-temporal "field" of the *totum simul* represents time at both its zero-point and the ultimate limit of total, metaphysical actualization. And between these ends, the zero-point and the ultimate limit of metaphysical actualization, there is an ontological oscillation to and fro eternally going on. And in this sense, the a-temporality of the *totum simul* constitutes a peculiar dimension of metaphysical temporality.

This state of affairs is typically exemplified by the Womb-Mandala of Shingon Buddhism representative of the Japanese Tantra. The Womb-Mandala of Shingon which is a pictorial presentation of *totum simul* here spoken of, clearly shows how the a-temporal dimension of being in which all things present themselves in their final metaphysical actualization, is pregnant with temporality. It goes without saying, however, that time in the a-temporal "field" assumes an extremely subtle form to which our ordinary, i.e., pre-contemplative or non-contemplative, cognition is totally unaccustomed. Time, in other words, when observed in its own dimension of a-temporality, necessarily undergoes a radical transformation to such an extent that it is, to the ordinary mind, simply no-time. And the contemplative experience of time thus transformed is at the basis of the Mahāyāna-Buddhist conception of time.

This, however, does not exhaust the theory of time in Mahāyāna Buddhism. For the a-temporal time of the *totum simul* is nothing but metaphysical time. It is metaphysically real, but not empirically real.

The Buddhist theory of time, as a theory of time, must necessarily extend toward the region of real temporality, that of time which is empirically real or time actualized in the empirical domain of human experience. For time itself, as I shall explain in detail in the second part of this paper is, in the Buddhist view, essentially a two-dimensional structure consisting of a-temporality and temporality. And the a-temporal dimension of time structurally cannot remain in itself; it must necessarily actualize itself in the dimension of empirical time.

As will be easy to see, the Buddhist conception of empirical time comes closer to our common-sense view of time. Yet, even in the empirical dimension of being, the Buddhist vision of time shows a striking difference from that of common sense. For, we must remember, it is still part of the contemplative experience of *samādhi*. As Buddhists would say, even in the midst of the empirical world the things are still in *samādhi*. It will but be natural that the ontic structure of the things in *samādhi* should manifest itself as something unusual from the viewpoint of the pre-contemplative or non-contemplative mind. And as the things appear in an unusual form, time also appears in an unusual form. The discussion of this point will form the central part of my talk, for it directly concerns the very core of the main problem of the present paper, namely, the theoretical peculiarity of the conception of time in Mahāyāna Buddhism in general and Zen Buddhism in particular.

Without going into details yet at this stage, let me simply point out the fact that the Buddhist vision of time in the sense of empirical temporality is characterized by its very peculiar "field" structure which differs in a remarkable way from the mandalic "field" structure of the a-temporal *totum simul*, although in reality it is but a temporal reflection of the latter. The field-conception of time stands opposed to the linear conception of time, the latter of which is the common-sense view of time, a view of time commonly shared by the majority of human beings.

In fact at the level of common-sense representation, time almost

invariably appears as a linear process or linear extension, a straight line divided into three distinctively different sections: past, present and future. Imaged in this way, time flows on like a river. Itself being vacant and without content of its own, it eternally flows, coming from no one knows where and going toward no one knows where, from the beginningless past through the present moment toward the endless future. All things, facts and events we experience in this world are like foam or bubbles afloat on the surface of the water. Appearing and disappearing, they are carried along by the flow of time which never stops even for a moment.

More philosophically stated, time is a straight-line framework of all ontic experiences. It is the most basic framework of experience which, though in itself vacant and contentless, structures the whole of our empirical experience of things and events in terms of pastness, presentness and futurity.

Whether this structuring framework of empirical experience is to be regarded as something objective endowed with a particular reality of its own and existing quite independently of our mind, or whether it is to be considered a form of our sensibility, a subjective pattern of cognition inherent in our mind, is another philosophical problem which we need not deal with in the present context, no matter how important it may be from the point of view of modern philosophy in the West. For Buddhism does not raise questions about time in such terms. What is really relevant to Buddhism is rather the fact that time in this kind of conception whether it be subjective or objective, turns out to be imaged as a straight line.

The straight-line image of time is found everywhere, not only in the world of common sense. Just to give a typical example, Newton who in his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* proposed the concept of "absolute time," defined the latter as a continuum of abstract point-instants, a constant and homogeneous flow which goes on interminably by its own nature, quite independently of the external world. The flow of homogeneous units, in other words, continues and subsists in its own right, regardless of whether there be

movement or not in the external world. Even when all things in the world have come to a complete standstill, time will still continue its homogeneous flow. As will be obvious, such a conception of time is almost diametrically opposed to the Buddhist conception of time. For time in the view of Buddhism is not a linear extension; it is not a homogeneous flow; it is closely connected with the existence of things; it is correlative with movement, there being no time where there is no movement; it is not objective, but profoundly subjective in the sense that the mind or consciousness is most intimately involved in the very structure of time.

Closer to the Buddhist view in this respect is the Kantian conception of time, although here again time is imaged as a straight line. As a matter of fact, Kant in his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* says that "time cannot be represented except in the form of a single, straight line." The straight line is divided into three major parts: past, present and future. And the straight line with this triple division, a line extending irreversibly from the past toward the future, is the image of time, extremely simple in its form and extremely poor in its content, which for Kant is an innate framework of sensory cognition. In respect of his emphasis on the pure subjectivity of time Kant comes close to Buddhism. But with regard to its simple formal structure as a straight line characterized by a strict irreversibility, the Kantian image of time drastically differs from that of Buddhism.

For the Buddhist, time, as I have just said, is not a straight line, a homogeneous continuum irreversibly flowing in one definite direction. Rather, it is a constantly moving juxtaposition of ontological "fields," each of which is a spread of being, complicated in internal structure and rich in ontological content. Here, too, time flows, but it flows in all directions; the flow, moreover, is reversible.

Even with regard to the pure subjectivity of time, Buddhism fundamentally differs from Kant. For in the Buddhist view, time is subjective not in the sense that it is a framework of cognitive experience inherent in the subject, but in the sense that time primarily is a product of the ontological *potentials* of the mind known as "seeds" (*bīja*),

incubated in the depths of the unconscious, and making their appearance in the domain of empirical experience in various forms of existence. This thesis, however, of the subjectivity of time in Mahāyāna Buddhism with its characteristic theory of the "seed" raises a series of subtle and difficult problems which I cannot properly deal with at this stage, particularly those relating to the psychic domain of the unconscious. I shall deal with them in the second part of this paper. Meanwhile there are several other, preliminary matters that must be clarified.

I have already used the word "field" a number of times in reference to the structure of time in Buddhism. By the word "field" I mean an energy space of any sort, physical, psychic or spiritual, which forms itself between two or more different factors, or, I should perhaps say, different sources of energy, through the dynamic relation of mutual repulsion and attraction between them. A "field," thus understood, is a special ontological space charged with a peculiar kind of tension coming from the interaction of two or more energy sources repelling and attracting, excluding and including each other. And time as conceived by the Buddhist is precisely a "field" in this sense. It is to be remarked, however, that by "time" is meant here primarily the present. For of the three traditional divisions of time, past, present and future, it is, at least in Mahāyāna Buddhism, only the present that is real and actual — I mean, phenomenally real and actual — whereas the past and future obtain their actuality only secondarily, through their internal relationship with the present.

It is important to observe in this connection a basic difference between the field-conception of time and the linear conception. In the latter conception of time, the present ultimately reduces itself to a point as the dividing limit between past and future. The present in the linear system cannot find itself except as the end of the past section and the beginning of the future section. As such it cannot but be a single instant of almost zero duration, a single point of absolutely no spatial extension in its representation.

The field-conception affords an entirely different outlook on the structure of time, being based as it is upon an entirely different ontological experience of reality. Postponing the discussion of the ontological background of the matter to a later stage, I shall be content at this point with making a few simple observations concerning the most salient features of the field-conception of time.

We may begin by remarking that in this view, time has its actuality only in the present, that is to say, the present is the only really existent time, and that here too — as in the linear conception — the present is physically a single point-instant. To this observation, however, we must immediately add another far more important one, namely, that this physical point of the present, in the Buddhist view of time, is not, in its internal structure, a point, but a "field" in the sense I have just explained. The point-instant of the present is internally a "field" formed by the interaction, i.e., interpenetration of the ontological energies of the three temporal factors, past, present and future. It is a "field" in which the things of the past are internal to the things of the present and future, the things of the future internal to the things of the past and present, and the present itself internal to the past and future. Such is the depth structure of the present instant. It has, as it were, an ontological thickness. Though it is reducible to a point and instant in its physical form, it is ontologically an expanse in the sense that it is a concentration point of all time and, therefore, of all existence — time being in the Buddhist view co-extensive with existence and in the last resort identical with existence. The temporal "field" formed by the mutual penetration of the past, present and future is thus also an ontological "field" formed by the mutual penetration of the whole of the existing things one into another, as so many ontological energies positively operative in the formation of the world of being irrespective of the tense distinctions between them.

It must be admitted that the temporal-ontological "field" I am now talking about is not exclusive to the Buddhist view of time. As an experiential fact, it is certainly something unusual. But even in

our ordinary, pre-contemplative or non-contemplative life, we do sometimes come across a temporal "field" of this sort. It will never occur in the "absolute time" of a Newton which is *ex hypothesi* a constant, uninterrupted, equal and homogeneous flow. But the so-called human time, i.e., existential time, is of an entirely different nature. The flow of human time which is most intimately related with our existential consciousness is intermittent and unequal. Far from being homogeneous, it changes its speed and weight from moment to moment in accordance with the psychological and psychic states we happen to be in, and at every moment it is experienced as something unique and new unless, indeed, we have "degenerated" into the routine pattern of being of what Martin Heidegger has called *das Man*.

The unhomogeneousness of time in the domain of daily life is felt with particular keenness when something extraordinary happens, particularly when we come across some event of an existential significance. Then that particular time may be experienced by us as an instant in which is concentrated the significance of our whole life, whole existence, and all time. The flow of time is suspended and the whole energy of existence is contracted into a point. A time-point of unusual psychic intensity and existential density comes into being. It is noteworthy that such moments of unusual intensity and density are not confined to the individual and personal life of man. They sometimes occur on a scale of incomparably greater magnitude in the history of humanity, as exemplified by the moment of the death of Christ on the cross, the moment of the Buddha's enlightenment under the morning star, and the like. Each of these moments is a *kairos*, a historic moment contracting in one single point the significance of the whole history of humanity. And that is exactly what the Buddhist understands by the word *shih*, "time."

It is important to remark with regard to this point that the *kairos* understood in the sense I have just explained, is, whether taken as a matter of personal and individual experience or as a historical event for humanity as a whole, something unusual to be experienced only

on rare occasions. Buddhism, however, takes the position that time itself is a succession of such *kairos*-points, that it should be experienced as such, lived as such, or realized as such. When one has realized that, one has attained enlightenment. This is indeed the inner structure of enlightenment-experience in Buddhism from the viewpoint of, or in terms of, time-consciousness. Time, Buddhism thus holds, is a juxtaposition of an infinite number of instants each of which is a moment of unusual ontological density and ontological weight — "unusual" from the point of view of common sense. In truth, i.e., from the Buddhist point of view, there is, there should be, nothing unusual about it. Time in its metaphysical-ontological reality is simply a succession of "fields," i.e., *kairos*-points; it can be nothing else. This is or this should be, the "usual" form assumed by time as it manifests itself in the mind as time-consciousness.

Time according to Buddhism is thus a succession of discrete instant-points, each of which is in itself an independent unit completely "cut off from before and after" as Buddhists describe it. These independent, discrete units are each a present-point, and the present-point is an ontological "field," a peculiar kind of internal space into which is condensed the totality of the experiences of all men, both past and future. It is an internal space permeated by an ontological tension arising from the interaction of all things, i.e., all times, compressed into an existential unity. Time is essentially a continuum consisting of such discrete present-instants as they are serialized in our consciousness. The implication of this is that we are experiencing at every moment of our existence the totality of existence which, on its part, goes on manifesting itself in a new and different form moment by moment. It will be quite clear, in the light of what I explained at the outset, that the serialization of the present point-instants as so many "fields" here spoken of, is nothing other than the actualization in the ontic dimension of temporality, of the *totum simul* which, on its part, is eternally realized in the metaphysical dimension of a-temporality. It is a reflection, a self-image as it were of a-temporality in the mirror of temporality.

I have in the preceding tried to give a summary exposition of what I consider to be the essentials of the conception of time in Mahāyāna Buddhism as it has been elaborated in the school of Zen in Japan. In fact, Japanese Zen, at least as far as concerns the philosophical treatment of the concept of time, may rightly be considered the final, culminating point of the long historical process of the development of Mahāyāna philosophy. My presentation, however, has up till now been intentionally made in very general and rather abstract terms. I must now begin to produce more concrete data to substantiate what I have said, in an attempt at giving some existential depth and theoretical precision to the analysis of time-consciousness in Mahāyāna Buddhism in general and Zen Buddhism in particular.

With this in view, I shall first present some facts about the historical development of the concept of time in Mahāyāna, and then analyze the structure of time in Zen as represented by Dōgen, the most outstanding Zen master in the thirteenth century Japan (1200–1253) and perhaps the most profound philosopher in the whole history of Zen Buddhism in both China and Japan.

As regards the history of the concept of time we must remember that Buddhism has from the very beginning shown a lively concern for the problem of time. There is in fact a certain respect in which the Buddha himself may be said to have founded his religion on the basis of his peculiar experience of time, for the so-called ephemerality of existence, the incessant and inevitable change of all things in the world, the lucid recognition of which motivated his personal conversion and formed the starting-point of his religious teaching, was after all a problem of time. And in the earliest, i.e., pre-Mahāyāna phase of Buddhist thought known as the *Abhidharma* or Hīnayāna scholastic philosophy, time was a subject of heated discussion among different schools, centering especially around the problem as to whether time is real or unreal.

The limited space at my disposal does not allow me to trace back the Zen conception of time to its earliest historical sources in the Hīnayāna periods. Nor is it even possible, to follow the entire history

of Mahāyāna Buddhism relating to the formation of the concept of time, up to its final philosophization by Dōgen.

Such being the case, I shall in what follows confine my attention to two of the major schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Hua Yen and the Wei Shih (*Yogācāra*), and try to outline the most conspicuous features of their time conceptions. These two schools have, each in its own way, determined the course of the development of Buddhist thought about time and thereby contributed toward making the Buddhist philosophy of time something unique in Oriental philosophy as a whole. To put it in a nutshell, the Hua Yen shows its peculiarity in ontology, namely — insofar as concerns the particular problem we are now interested in — in the ideas it develops around the essential relationship between the structure of being and the structure of time. The Wei Shih school, on its part, has brought to light a very remarkable relationship existing between time and consciousness on the basis of its peculiar analysis of the structure of consciousness, or we should rather say, the structure of the unconscious, by theoretically elucidating the way time takes its rise in the depths of the human psyche before it comes up to the surface consciousness in the form in which it is ordinarily experienced as time. These and other related matters will form the subject of the second part of my talk.

II

Turning now to the historical aspects of the problem of time in Mahāyāna Buddhism, I shall first discuss briefly the position taken by the Yogācāra school. This school of Buddhism is known in China as the *wei shih* school — a very revealing name, for the word *wei shih* (as, indeed, its Sanskrit original, *vijñapti-mātratā*) literally means "cognition-only" or "consciousness-only." This school, in fact, distinguishes itself from the rest of the Buddhist schools by a very peculiar analysis it makes of the structure of human consciousness.

Consciousness or the Mind, in the view of this school, is a psychic domain of being consisting of three different strata: (1) the surface

stratum comprising the six senses and the faculty of thinking, (2) the middle stratum consisting in the ego-consciousness, i.e., the awareness of the self as the independent subject of sensation, feeling, emotion and thinking, and (3) the depth-stratum of the unconscious or subconscious. It is the last named, the depth-stratum called *ālaya-vijñāna* or *ālaya*-consciousness that plays the central role in the theory of the Mind of the Wei Shih school.

The school characteristically holds that the whole world of being is nothing but a product of the Mind consisting of the three successive layers just mentioned. Hence the appellation: the Mind-Only school. But within the Mind itself thus structured the first two strata, the surface stratum of the six senses and the middle stratum of ego-consciousness, are themselves a product of the third, i.e., the *ālaya*-consciousness, which produces the upper two strata through its inner transformation, so that the world of being as a whole, including both the internal and the external world, is ultimately a product of the *ālaya*-consciousness. All things, in other words, are literally "phenomena" arising out of the region of the unconscious in the Mind.

The word *ālaya* in Sanskrit means "storage," "depository" or "storehouse." Thus the *ālaya*-consciousness in concrete imagery appears as a kind of storehouse in which are preserved all the karmic effects or impressions left behind by whatever man has experienced in the past, whether internally or externally. Every experience, be it a bodily action or mental, cannot but "fumigate" — to use the technical terminology of this school — the depth-stratum of the Mind and "perfume" it with its own ontological odor. And the "fumigation" (*vāsanā*) of the *ālaya*-consciousness by the "odor" of human experience results in the formation of ontological potentialities or proclivities in the subconscious darkness of the psyche. Technically known as "seed" (*bīja*), each of these latent powers is kept in the storehouse of the *ālaya*-consciousness, until, when the necessary conditions are obtained, it comes up to the daylight levels of consciousness and manifests itself in the double form of the cognizing subject

and the cognized object. This is how the Wei Shih school explains the process of the cognition of the external world which ordinary language describes by saying that somebody (the subject) perceives something (the object). In truth, neither the subject nor the object really exists in the external world. The external world itself does not exist objectively. All are but ontological images (*vijñapti*) emerging out of the *ālaya*-consciousness, each as a phenomenal actualization of a particular "seed" kept in that inner storehouse.

The Wei Shih theory of time is most intimately connected with the theory of "seed." This implies that time originates in the invisible depths of consciousness and that it owes its essential structure exclusively to the peculiar relationship the "seeds" bear to each other in the *ālaya*-consciousness and the way they function in producing the images of our empirical world.

As we have already observed, everything that is recognized as a thing in the empirical world, whether mental or external, is a particular image-form assumed by a "seed" actualized, as it comes out of the original state of latency in the unconscious onto the surface level of consciousness. But — and this is the beginning of the most characteristic part of Wei Shih ontology — the "seed" actualized does not maintain itself in the state of actualization except for a single instant. At the very next instant it ceases to be actual. This means that a thing which is phenomenally actual and present to the phenomenal subject at this moment ceases to exist already at the next moment. How, then, can we account for the empirical impression that things ordinarily continue to be the same over a certain span of time? The Wei Shih school has its own answer to this crucial question, which is as follows.

That which appears to the empirical eye as one and the same thing continuing to exist for some time (say, a certain thing, A) is a series of closely similar phenomenal forms,

$$A^1—A^2—A^3—A^4— \ldots A^x,$$

taken for a continuously existing entity. It is in reality a false ontological unity composed of a number of discrete units, each of which represents a unique actualization of a unique "seed." The actualization of a "seed" is in every case momentary. The particular "seed" (a^1), for example, which has brought forth the particular phenomenal form (A^1) immediately loses its actuality and ceases to be operative. It annihilates itself never to be actualized again. So of course it is incapable of producing the next phenomenal form, A^2. That is to say, A^2 must be produced by its own "seed" (a^2) which is different from the "seed" a^1.

The two "seeds," a^1 and a^2, however, are not entirely independent of each other. Quite the contrary. For, as the first "seed," a^1, actualizes itself into its own phenomenal form, A^1, it "fumigates," exactly in that same instant, the *ālaya*-consciousness; that is to say, just as it becomes actual it impresses the unconscious, leaving there the subtle effect of its actualization, which immediately results in the birth of a new "seed" there. And this second "seed" is precisely the "seed" a^2, which, all other conditions remaining the same, produces on the

"seed" a^1
produces the actual
form A^1 in the empirical
stratum of the Mind.

produces a new "seed"
in the depth stratum
of the Mind.

spot the second phenomenal form, A^2, in the external world, i.e., in the empirical dimension of the Mind. And this process of the successive production of "seeds" as a series of causes and effects continues indefinitely as long as the determining conditions remain essentially unchanged. This is the origin of time-consciousness. Otherwise expressed, the successive instants of the just-mentioned cause-effect

relationship between the actualized "seeds," when taken as a continuum, is represented as a temporal process, i.e., time. Time thus produced, however, is obviously nothing but a subjective impression having ontological validity only for the phenomenal ego which forms itself in the above-mentioned second stratum of consciousness. Time represented as a straight line, uninterruptedly flowing onward in one direction is, in the view of the Wei Shih, but a delusion, an ontological delusion deep-seated in the ego-stratum of the Mind.

The truth about time, according to the Wei Shih, is that it is a succession of discrete units, each of which is an instant-point. And each instant is "present" in the sense that it is an actual self-presentation of a particular "seed" in a particular form. Thus the internal structure of the present consists in an instantaneous event of a "seed" coming out of the *ālaya*-consciousness, actualizing itself in a definite form in the phenomenal dimension of the Mind, and "fumigating" at the same time another "seed" in the *ālaya*-consciousness. And the instantaneous occurrence of this psychic event is subjectively grasped as a temporal-ontological expanse in which the ego perceives an externally existent object. The present-instants each of which is thus an independent event, appear to the deluded mind as if they formed a smooth continuum called time. This of course implies that the mirage of time will completely dissipate when one attains enlightenment. But that is a question irrelevant to the topic of this paper.

Far more important for our purpose is to observe that, in the Wei Shih view, the present instant-point, being just an instant as it is, integrates into its own unity the infinite past and the infinite future. This is basically due to the very make-up of the "seed." A "seed" stored in the *ālaya*-consciousness is a product of the past *karma;* in itself it is also an ontological potentiality, and as such, it necessarily determines the future. Both the past and future are internally actual to the present instant in that they exercise an influence upon it and determine its mode of being. There is at the present instant an interpenetration of the past and future. The present, moved in this way by both the past and future, actualizes itself as an instant-point highly

charged with an ontological energy. The present, being such an instant of temporal-ontological "thickness," is real for the Mind which, as the phenomenal subject of cognition, perceives its own image in the form of an objectively existent "thing."

This is a summary exposition of the Wei Shih philosophy of time. Here I would draw attention once again to the fact that time-consciousness in the view of the Wei Shih essentially stands on the basis of the actualization of "seeds." We must remember, however, that not all "seeds" actualize themselves in the empirical dimension of our experience. A "seed" may be born in the unconscious, but it does not necessarily come up to the domain of daylight consciousness. For a "seed" cannot actualize itself unless all conditions for actualization are obtained. In a negative situation, there is only a succession of "seeds" appearing and disappearing instant by instant, forming at every moment a cause-effect relationship between two "seeds." All this, be it remarked, takes place strictly within the confines of the *ālaya*-consciousness. It is, in other words, a psychic event occurring only in the unconscious.

Suppose now a "seed" comes to be newly deposited in the *ālaya*-consciousness. Since every "seed" is essentially of a momentary nature, it cannot subsist even in the state of latency for two consecutive moments. So the new "seed" which has come into being at this moment in the *ālaya*-consciousness must disappear at the next. But at the moment of disappearance it gives birth to another "seed." And this repeats itself until all conditions for actualization become fulfilled so that the particular "seed" standing at the end of the chain might become actualized.

It is to be observed that this process of a "seed" giving birth to a new "seed" in the *ālaya*-consciousness is structurally a two-moment event, in contrast to the above-explained event of the "fumigation" of a new "seed" by a "seed" which has actualized itself in a phenomenal form. For in the latter case, the "fumigation" and "actualization" occur simultaneously, the whole thing being a one-moment event.

As has just been pointed out, the successive occurrence of the two-moment events, i.e., the successive origination of the non-actualized "seeds," is something taking place in the interior of the *ālaya*-consciousness. And since the *ālaya*-consciousness is the domain of the unconscious, we can never become aware of what is taking place there. That is to say, the chain of "seeds" succeeding one another never produces time-consciousness. There is actually no time within the *ālaya*-consciousness. Time appears only in the empirical world, although the ontological "seeds" at work in the unconscious are all directly or indirectly time potentials.

Let us leave the Wei Shih school at this point and turn to the Hua Yen school. One cannot talk about Hua Yen thought without talking about its ontology, no matter what the specific topic may happen to be. Ontology, indeed, is the center and basis of the entire edifice of Hua Yen philosophy. This is why I start by giving a rough outline of Hua Yen ontology in order to clarify the Hua Yen conception of time. For in the case of this school, the conception of time is, I believe, best understandable as a corollary or extension of the conception of being.

Now the first point to note about the ontology of the Hua Yen school is the fact that it is a theoretical construction built upon the idea of what we might properly call the "ontological transparency" of all existents. Each of the existents in the world is distinctively itself. In the ontological system of this philosophy based on the vision of reality peculiar to the afore-mentioned Ocean-Imprint-Contemplation, there is absolutely no place for anything like the ontological Chaos which characterizes in such a remarkable way the world-view of a Chuang-tzŭ. Everything, on the contrary, is here clearly marked by its own contour. Things never become blurred and indistinguishable from one another. *A* is *A* and *B* is *B*; they never become confused. And yet, on the other hand, everything, instead of being a closed entity, is infinitely open to everything else. *A* is thus ontologically transparent to *B*, and *B* transparent to *A*. That is to say, *A*,

without ever blurring its contour, freely penetrates into *B*, and *B* likewise into *A*. Widening our vision beyond *A* and *B* to the limit of the whole world of being, we might express the same ontological situation by saying that *A* penetrates into all other things, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, etc., while the other things, in their turn, penetrate all together into *A*. Presented in an extremely simplified form, this is the state of affairs indicated by the celebrated principle of Hua Yen ontology called the "unobstructed interpenetration of all things." Through poetic imagery, one sometimes describes this vision of being by saying: "in a mote of dust the entire universe is contained," for instance, or: "a flower blooms and the whole world blooms into spring." Let me expand upon the subject a bit more systematically.

Suppose, for the convenience of explanation, reality is exhausted by five different things, *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*. And suppose there is now in our presence *A*, and *A* alone. We see a flower, for example. *A*, the flower, asserts itself as *A*, that is, *A* clearly distinguishes itself from the rest. Moreover, there is now apparently nothing else. This, however, does not mean, according to Hua Yen philosophy, that there is really nothing other than *A* in our presence. The truth of the matter is rather that *B*, *C*, *D* and *E* are all there within the very constitution of *A*, always present but concealed, i.e., in the state of ontological

A

B C D E

self-nihilization. Otherwise, *A* itself cannot be *A*. For everything actually existent, according to the Hua Yen, is a result of the collaboration of all other things in the world. The same is true of *B*, into the constitution of which *A*, this time, together with *C*, *D*, *E*, enter through ontological self-nihilization. What is meant here by the "self-nihilization" of a thing is that the thing makes itself ontologically powerless or non-operative, keeping itself in the back, in latency. Thus, whenever any one of the *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E* is empirically present and

B

A C D E

actual, all the rest are also there, though invisible, participating in its constitution. It is in this sense that the Hua Yen proposes to understand the famous metaphysical proposition: One is Many and Many is One.

In order to visualize this ontological fact, the Hua Yen often uses the ingenious metaphor of brilliantly illumined gems reflecting each

A
E B
D C

other in ever-expanding networks of light. Suppose the number of the gems is limited to five: *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E* facing each other. In *A* are reflected *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*. And so with the others. That is to say, in *B* are reflected *A*, *C*, *D*, *E*, and so on and so forth. But this is just the first stage of the mutual reflection of the gems.

At the next stage we witness how *B*, for instance, in which are reflected *A*, *C*, *D*, *E*, is reflected in *A*, so that in the mirror of *A* there appear the reflected images of *B*, *C*, *D*, *E* and *A* itself, all together. So too with each of the *B*, *C*, *D* and *E*. This is the second stage of their mutual reflection.

Then, at the following stages, *A* reflecting in itself *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, is reflected in each of the *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, the whole of which is again reflected in *A*, and so on and so forth. The process of the mutual reflection of the five gems goes on indefinitely, stage after stage, until at the end there arises before us a magnificent edifice of lights reflecting one another and being reflected in one another, endlessly multiplied. This is the way the world of being is apprehended in the Ocean-Imprint-Contemplation. Thus the world of being in the Hua Yen view manifests itself as a reality of infinite depth and density of luminosity.

And this is, in the Hua Yen interpretation, the real metaphysical meaning of sayings like "A mote of dust rises, and the whole world rises therewith," or "A grain of sand is the whole universe." That is to say, even the tiniest thing in the world has an infinite ontological depth, the ontological depth being constituted by all things being reflected in the thing, including that very thing as it is reflected in all other things.

It will be natural that this structure observable in the constitution of being should be immediately reflected in the structure of time. In fact, there can structurally be no discrepancy between time and being. For time is most intimately and essentially connected with being. It is just an essential mode of being of every being. If, therefore, there is an ontological interpenetration of things, there must also be their temporal interpenetration.

We have observed in the foregoing how, in the view of Hua Yen ontology, all things freely and unobstructedly interpenetrate each other, so that each one of the things, by being itself, is all the things. In every thing is realized the whole universe. In terms of the contrast between a-temporality and temporality mentioned in the first part of the present paper, the ontological situation we are talking about now may properly be understood as the temporal realization of the a-temporal *totum simul* in the form of a simultaneous actualization of all things in one single instant-point. As Fa Ts'ang (643–712), the greatest philosopher of the Hua Yen school, remarks: "The totality of the things come into being at one stroke, simultaneously in an instant." Translated into our own terminology, this statement would mean that the a-temporal "field" of the *totum simul* actualizes itself in the dimension of temporality as a succession of temporal "fields," each one of which is ontologically a thing and temporally an instant. Thus each of the temporal "fields" reflects in itself the a-temporal "field," reproducing in its internal structure the structure of the latter, that is, reproducing the *totum simul* in the form of an ontological-temporal interpenetration of all things, so that, as every individual

thing is the whole universe, every single instant is all time. And the instant thus realized is, in terms of the ordinary tense distinctions, is the present.

The present — or more exactly, the present instant — viewed in this perspective is naturally characterized by a temporal density just as every thing in its internal constitution is marked by an ontological density. For the present instant-point as a temporal actualization of the a-temporal *totum simul* is a locus in which all things multi-dimensionally interpenetrate each other into a unity. From the viewpoint of temporality this can mean nothing other than that the present instant-point is a locus in which all time distinctions interpenetrate each other and converge into a temporal unity. The present in this sense, and in this sense only, is eternity.

The present instant is in this way the point of integration of all time distinctions. And time is always actual only at the present instant-point. And it means that the world of being is actual only at the present instant-point. Both time and the world are a succession of such instantaneous points which go on appearing and disappearing indefinitely, one after another. At every point all time is realized at once, and all things arise simultaneously, to be annihilated on the spot and replaced by what the next point brings in afresh.

After this long detour, we are now back to the point we started from, namely, the conception of time in Zen Buddhism as represented by Dōgen in his major work, *Shōbōgenzō*. Against the background of the knowledge just given of some of the important ideas about time and time-consciousness that have been put forward in the course of the historical development of Mahāyāna Buddhism before the rise of Zen Buddhism, we are, I hope, now in a position to understand with some precision, and perhaps some profundity, Dōgen's philosophy of time which I described in rough outlines in the first part of the paper.

I shall start by stating forthwith that the central point of Dōgen's thought, the most important and the most fundamental idea

concerning time is in his case what he intends to convey by his peculiar expression: *uji* meaning "existence-time." We have already seen in the foregoing, particularly in the explanation of Hua Yen philosophy, the most intimate relationship between ontology and the theory of time in Mahāyāna Buddhism. This goes back to an old idea which existed in Buddhism already in the earliest phases of its history, namely, that time and thing are absolutely inseparable from one another. Indeed, in the course of its history Buddhism has never regarded time as something subsisting independently of the things, as, for example, a vacant framework, whether ontological or cognitive, which structures things and events in terms of coming into being, existing for some time and then going to nought.

Dōgen, however, goes a step further. Without remaining content with the primary proposition of Buddhist ontology that time and thing are inseparable from one another, he directly identifies time with being and being with time. He asserts, in other words, that time *is* existence and existence *is* time. To "be" is to "time." And that is *uji*, "existence-time," to be strictly distinguished from "existence *and* time." "To be is to time" — this proposition has its corollary in the proposition that whatever exists is time, that everything in the world is time. "The pine tree is time," he says, "and the bamboo is also time." That this is not a casual remark will spring to the eye if we observe that, for Dōgen, the realization of this fact immediately leads to the experience of enlightenment, the realization of the absolute truth about Reality. Here is what he says regarding this point. "Mountain is time, and ocean is time. If it were not for time, mountain and ocean would have no existence. Even in the dimension of the a-temporal Now (i.e., the a-temporal *totum simul* actualized in the empirical dimension of being as the so-called eternal Now) you should not consider the mountain and ocean timeless. If time is annihilated, the mountain and ocean would be annihilated. But time being never annihilated, the mountain and ocean are never annihilated. The moment this truth is realized, there appears the Morning Star, that is, there appears the *Tathāgata*, the Buddha... Such is (the significance of)

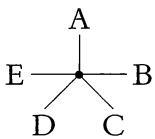
time. If it were not for time, such an event could never take place."

The real meaning of the words just quoted will forever remain hidden from us if we are to understand the word "time" in the ordinary sense. The "time" which Dōgen is here speaking of is *uji*, "existence-time," time with an ontological density as we have elucidated earlier, or rather, time *as* the ontological density of all things actualized multi-dimensionally all at once. Otherwise expressed, what is meant here by "time" is the a-temporal *totum simul* as actualized in the dimension of temporality. We must recall at this point what we have observed earlier, namely, that the actualization of the a-temporal *totum simul* in the dimension of temporality always and invariably takes place in the form of the present instant-point which Dōgen designates by a peculiar word, *nikon*, i.e., the a-temporal Now, meaning the present instant as the temporal actualization-point of the a-temporal totality of the things.

For a right understanding of what has just been said, we must never lose sight of the fact that all this is a matter of contemplative awareness, that it concerns the nature of time as it appears to the mind in the Ocean-Imprint-Contemplation. As we know already, time in this situation is observed or experienced as something of a two-dimensional structure, the two dimensions being a-temporality and temporality. The distinction itself is strictly speaking a theoretical one, for as a matter of contemplative experience, time is always simultaneously realized in these two dimensions. A-temporality necessarily actualizes itself as temporality and temporality is always a-temporality actualized. Yet it is, on the other hand, an undeniable fact that the contemplative experience of time has these aspects which structurally must be distinguished from one another. Let us first analyze the structure of the a-temporal dimension of time.

That which characterizes this dimension is spatialization of time in a very special form. Certainly, in our ordinary, i.e., pre-contemplative experience, too, time is always more or less spatialized. For, as Kant remarked, the representation of time as a measurable quantity, as a kind of length, necessarily requires its spatialization. Time

represented as a continuous straight line (A → B → C → D → E) is evidently time spatialized. But the spatialization of time we are now talking about is of an entirely different nature. In the pre-contemplative or empirical representation, time appears as a continuous flow. Spatialized as a straight line, it is always and constantly flowing.



In the representation peculiar to the a-temporal dimension of contemplative awareness, on the contrary, time, instead of forming a flowing line, manifests itself as a spatial expanse of infinite depth and width. It is the spatial expanse of the *totum simul*, which we may call the Mandala of a-temporality, an ontological space in which all things are laid out completely actualized simultaneously, all being equidistant from the center, their temporal distinctions in terms of pastness, presentness and futurity having been obliterated in a tenseless, static order. Not that time has been annihilated. Time is there, except that its flow is now suspended. Time cannot flow. For where all things are in a state of ultimate actualization there is no place for time to flow. The whole world of being has sunken into absolute stillness and quietude. We are now in the a-temporal "field" of time.

With regard to time in this dimension, Dōgen points out, against the common-sense view of time, that it is a mistake to imagine time always and essentially as passing. "Do not imagine time," he says, "exclusively as something flying away. Do not think that flying-away is the only function of time. If time consisted only in flying away, there would always be a wide gap separating (us from time, i.e., time would fly ahead and we would be left behind). The real meaning of *uji*, existence-time, is rarely understood because the ordinary people tend to think that time is just fleeting." But it is difficult to realize the non-fleeting aspect of time. Usually we say: I saw a thing, *A*, a long

time ago; I saw another thing, *B*, yesterday; and today I see a different thing, *C*. The *C* alone is actually existent, whereas *A* and *B* are no longer here; they have ceased to exist; for the time of *A* and the time of *B* have flown away. By thinking this way we simply ignore the fact that there is no distinction between yesterday and today from the viewpoint of the Mandala of a-temporality. We forget that in the metaphysical dimension of being which reveals itself to contemplative awareness, the *A* which we saw a long time ago and the *B* which we saw yesterday are still with us at this moment with and in the *C* which we are now perceiving.

Suppose, Dōgen says, I go into a mountainous region intending to reach a beautiful palace existing in a place beyond the mountains. The journey takes many days. I climb the mountains up and down one after another until finally I arrive at the palace. In the recollection of my journey, my going-over of the mountains is variously dated. Consequently every mountain is tensed. Now that I am sitting in the palace, I look back and say: all those mountains which I have come over may still be there, somewhere, but they are all far away, both temporally and spatially. A long distance separates me from them. Just contrast this kind of thinking, Dōgen goes on, with the view I take of the whole region at a glance, when I go up to the peak of the highest mountain, and standing there, look over the mountains I have come over. They are visible all together simultaneously in the a-temporal expanse, there being no "prior" and "posterior" among them. All the mountains in this sense are equidistant from me, i.e., the Mind in contemplation or the "Center" of the Mandala of a-temporality. Such in fact is the internal structure of the *totum simul*, the a-temporal dimension of existence-time.

As I have repeatedly pointed out in the course of this paper, however, it belongs to the very nature of a-temporality to actualize itself in temporality. The *A*, *B*, *C*, *D* and *E* which have co-existed all together in the simultaneous, metaphysical actualization of the *totum simul* in the Mandala of a-temporality, dissociate themselves from the a-temporal Mandala and suddenly begin to appear one after another

in a state of perpetual flux, forming a succession of temporal units (*A* → *B* → *C* → *D* → *E*) which resembles in outward form the ordinary, pre-contemplative representation of time as a straight line. Yet the resemblance is merely formal. There is in truth a remarkable difference between the two. For in the case of the temporal sequence of things experienced as a direct "temporalization" of the a-temporal "field" of the *totum simul*, each of the temporal things which is in itself a single ontological instant, is in its internal structure an actualization-point of all other ontological instants. In this respect, all the ontological instants in the temporal sequence are, though individually different from one another, one a-temporal Now (*nikon*) which is nothing other than the temporal image of the a-temporal "field" of the *totum simul* produced by the latter as it reflects itself in the mirror of temporality. And that which unifies all the ontological instants into the oneness of the a-temporal Now is the contemplative center of the Mind which Dōgen calls the "I," meaning thereby the contemplative I. The contemplative I which thus functions in the temporal dimension of being as the unifying point of all ontological instants at every instant, is exactly the same thing as what manifests itself as the center of the a-temporal Mandala, only the form being different. For as the a-temporal Mandala reproduces itself in the dimension of temporality and evolves in temporal sequence, the constituent units of the Mandala naturally lose their ontological equidistance from the center. Yet the center itself becomes never lost. Even after the dissolution of the Mandala, it maintains itself in a different form in each of the ontological instants in the temporal dimension of being, as the I, the unifying point of all instants.

Emphasizing the constant presence of the I, understood in this sense, in each of the things and events in the temporal dimension of existence-time, i.e., in each of the ontological instants, as its central point integrating all units of time and being, Dōgen continues the above-introduced story of a man traveling in the mountainous region. He says: "This is not the only right way to interpret the matter. (This is said in reference to the ordinary way of thinking about the

things one has experienced in the past, namely, that they have by now completely come to nought or, at least, they are now separated from me by a long distance.) For, when the man climbed the mountains and crossed the rivers, his I was always there. But the I is time. And the same I is actually present still now. (In this sense) time never passes away. Thus, with regard to the aspect of no-coming and no-going of time, the (so-called past) time of the man's climbing the mountains (is not in truth past; rather, it) is the a-temporal Now of existence-time. But in terms of the aspect of coming and going, too, the I always remains actual (behind the phenomenal appearance of things coming and going) and (here again) the I is the a-temporal Now of existence-time. Such, indeed, is the nature of existence-time."

Thus, in the contemplative vision of Dōgen, this temporal world of ours appears as consisting of an infinite number of sequences of things, running not in one direction alone, from the past toward the future, or as Dōgen says, from yesterday to today and from today to tomorrow, but in all directions, from today to yesterday, from tomorrow to yesterday and even from today to today. And each of the things in the sequences is time, i.e., an independent present-instant. But every one of these ontological present-instants, though independent and "completely cut off from before and after," integrates into its own existential unity all the rest of the ontological instants through the presence of the I, the center of existence-time, which was originally the center of the Mandala of a-temporality and which at every moment actualizes itself in the dimensions of temporality as the a-temporal Now. Thus time in the ontological dimension of temporality as distinguished from the a-temporality of the *totum simul*, does come and go. Otherwise, there would be no time-consciousness. There is nevertheless a certain respect in which it never comes and goes. And in this latter aspect, the structure of temporality imitates in its own way the structure of a-temporality.

BETWEEN IMAGE AND NO-IMAGE: FAR EASTERN WAYS OF THINKING

ERANOS 48
(1979)

I

Within the boundaries determined by the main theme: "Thought and Mythic Images," I have decided to take up a special problem relating to the fundamental structure of the image-making or image-producing mechanism of human consciousness. As suggested by the main title of my paper, I shall discuss the problem in terms of the relationship between No-Image and Image. As a matter of fact, "Between Image and No-Image" represents one of the most basic patterns of philosophical thinking in the Far East, so much so that the majority of the schools of Far Eastern philosophy can, I think, be fundamentally characterized by the different attitudes they take toward this very problem: "Between Image and No-Image." Hence the subtitle: "Far Eastern Ways of Thinking."

As to the formulation itself: "Between Image and No-Image" it may be taken as referring to a static, structural relationship between the realm of No-Image and that of concrete images. This is certainly a possible — or rather, philosophically an exceedingly important — approach to the problem. But the state of affairs indicated by the title may and must also be looked at from an equally important, more dynamic, i.e., genetic point of view, namely, as the problem of how

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The theme of Eranos 48 (1979), that is, the 48th Eranos Conference Yearbook, which is the compilation of lectures given at the Eranos Conference in 1979, was "Denken und mythische Bildwelt — Thought and Mythic Images — Image mythique et pensée."

images emerge out of their ultimate source, which is the No-Image. The title, in that perspective, will justifiably be reformulated as: "From No-Image to Image."

It is, indeed, characteristic of the Far Eastern way of thinking in general with regard to the problem of mental images that they are attributed to a peculiar creative activity of the Imageless or No-Image itself. Images, in this view, ultimately originate in the No-Image. All images that emerge into the daylight brightness of consciousness are first incubated and formed in the darkness of the sphere of No-Image, whether the latter be psychological or metaphysical. They are, in other words, all self-expressions of the No-Image. And this, in fact, is the most basic form of thinking concerning the origination of images commonly shared by the major traditions of Far Eastern philosophy.

This, however, is but a formal and extremely general observation. Real problems begin to confront us only when we actually try to determine in more concrete terms the main lines along which the various traditions of Far Eastern philosophy develop their thought on the problem of the origination of images out of the No-Image. For, although the basic formula: "From No-Image to Image" is common to all schools, they actually manifest conspicuous differences among themselves with regard to the kind of images they are interested in, the way the images are thought to come out of their non-sensible source, and, the most important of all, the very conception of the No-Image itself. Moreover, the various schools of thought markedly differ from one another regarding the levels of consciousness in reference to which the problems of Image and No-Image are to be raised in the most significant way.

Since the limitation of time at my disposal does not allow me to deal even cursorily with all the major philosophical-religious traditions of the Far East, I shall choose from among them only three, namely, the *I Ching*, Classical Taoism of Lao-tzŭ and Chuang-tzŭ, and Zen Buddhism, so that I might discuss at some length the problem of the emergence of images out of the No-Image as it is dealt with in

the representative works of these schools, to see how the basic pattern of thinking concerning the origination of images, assumes a different form and different significance in each case. In fact, these three being admittedly representative of Far Eastern thought, the variations they play on the same theme: "Between Image and No-Image" or "From No-Image to Image," will hopefully bring to light the main characteristics of the Far Eastern theories of image, no matter how far my exposition may be from being complete and exhaustive.

As will naturally be expected, each of the three schools of Far Eastern philosophy here chosen has developed or at least potentially possesses a peculiar theory of image of its own and actually or virtually entertains a remarkably characteristic view on the nature of images, the way they arise out of the No-Image, and the structural relation they bear with the things in the so-called external world. Leaving a detailed discussion of these and other related problems to a later stage of this paper, I shall content myself here with simply characterizing in an introductory manner the three schools in terms of the position taken by each of them regarding the fundamental mode of being peculiar to images.

The symbolic system of the *I Ching*, as is well known, consists of the sixty-four Hexagrams which are formally nothing but the sixty-four mathematically possible combinations of the two primary symbols known respectively as Yin and Yang, the Yin being graphically represented by a broken line and the Yang by an unbroken line. As such, the *I Ching* symbols, whether fully developed into Hexagrams or reduced to their most elementary forms, the Yin-line and Yang-line, are purely abstract or vacant forms having in themselves nothing to do with concrete imagery. These abstract symbols, therefore, represent the stage of No-Image in the semiotic structure of the *I Ching* as a divinatory system. Looked at it as such a system of purely formal symbols, the *I Ching* is an entirely imageless world.

Out of this imageless system of abstract symbols, however, images

do emerge, and they emerge in such profusion that the world of the *I Ching* strikes one in actuality as a world filled up with images. The problem, then, which we are immediately faced with in this respect is: How does this profusion of images come out of the No-Image? Without giving any theoretic explanation at this stage, I would simply state that the images in the *I Ching* arise through the process of our interpreting the abstract forms originally given, for the purpose of obtaining relevant oracles from them. That is to say, the images are generated as we try to interpret or find meanings relevant to our purposes of divination in those abstract combinations of broken and unbroken lines. The *I Ching* symbols may be said to be "heuristic" in the sense that they are so made as to incite our mind to find out secret meanings hidden under their seemingly vacant forms, while the images thus generated are of a "hermeneutic" nature. The *I Ching* images are hermeneutic images in the sense that they are all results of an interpretative act on our part motivated by the desire to find out what is really meant by the abstract, but heuristic symbols called Hexagrams.

With the Classical Taoism of Lao-tzŭ and Chuang-tzŭ we step into an entirely different world. Certainly, it is also a world replete with images, but the images that fill up the Taoist space are of a different kind from those that fill up the mandalic space of the *I Ching* Hexagrams. Not only is their function different, but the No-Image itself from which they emerge is of a totally different nature.

Symbols, to begin with, are not there as abstract, vacant forms waiting for interpretation, inviting us to find imaged meanings for them. They are already, from the very beginning, images — vividly concrete images. The images are here identical with symbols, i.e., they function as symbols, in the sense that they are direct self-expressions of the mind induced through contemplation into a state of mythopoeic excitation, and that therefore they represent a peculiar vision of reality as reflected in the mirror of consciousness at a certain stage of contemplative experience, at which the human mind

begins to manifest its myth-making nature.

All this means in short that the major images in Classical Taoism are mythopoeic images. Being mythopoeic, they cannot but evolve by themselves as well as in association with each other. By nature they tend to develop into symbolic tales and often authentic myths.

But what really characterizes Taoism and distinguishes it from all other similar phenomena is the fact that the mythopoeic evolvement of images in Taoism symbolically reflects and reproduces — or rather, we should say, is itself a symbolic self-expression of — a metaphysical experience of Being in which the existence of all things in the so-called empirical world is actually experienced as an ontological process of their emerging out of the primordial Nothing, and establishing themselves gradually in the domain of phenomenal multiplicity. In addition to being mythopoeic, the images in Taoism are in this sense essentially metaphysical due to the metaphysical experience of Being that underlies their mythopoeic evolvement.

This determines the way our basic formula: "From No-Image to Image" is to be understood in the particular context of Classical Taoism. It is to be understood in reference to, and within the framework of, the special metaphysical-mythopoeic structure of the Taoist imagery. The No-Image is here represented by the metaphysical Nothing, the Imageless as Lao-tzŭ himself calls it. The Imageless is formless. Absolutely no form is visible. But from the very midst of this darkness of formlessness, as if by dint of the natural law of self-articulation, there come out visible forms, at first vague and indistinct, but turning soon clear and distinct. As soon as these forms become distinctly discernible, they are reflected in the mind and produce there mythopoeic images which, from then on, follow their own course in *mythopoesis*. That which is indicated by the formula: "From No-Image to Image" is thus in Taoism a symbolic or mythic reproduction of a metaphysical vision of Being, in which one witnesses the primordial Nothing as it goes on producing interminably out of itself images of its own, which, spreading out in all directions, finally establish themselves as the phenomenal world. It goes without saying that

the phenomenal world itself would in such a vista appear in a totally different light, differently structured, from what commonsense understands by the words "phenomenal," "empirical," or "physical" world.

From the viewpoint of the theory of image, what is offered by Zen Buddhism will strike one as something unusual and strange, the farthest removed from the common-sense understanding of a theory of image. Is there, to begin with, such a thing as a Zen theory of image? The answer to be expected to this question would seem to be only in the negative. No — one would say — there is nothing in Zen which might be considered to be even suggestive of a theory of image, for Zen on principle refuses to have anything to do with images. This way of looking at Zen Buddhism is not at all groundless. We may remark in this respect that the fundamental attitude of Zen toward the world of Being is markedly "sober." No more imagination, no more *mythopoesis*. Zen is through and through non-mythical, or even anti-mythical. This, however, does not mean that Zen is "sober" in the sense of being "realistic." Quite the contrary; the world-view of Zen actually forms a striking contrast to the so-called realistic view of things. For what is ordinarily considered the realistic view of things is, from the standpoint of Zen Buddhism, nothing other than a systematic epistemic deformation or distortion of the true reality of the things. Far from being realistic in the strict sense of the word, what is presented by the so-called "realistic" view is, according to Zen, a dreamlike picture of the things.

Instead of disclosing to us the true reality of things it presents them to our eyes grossly deformed through a thick veil of dream-like images. And, be it remarked, when Zen speaks of "dream-like images," it does not mean symbolic, mystic, or mythopoeic images alone. In fact, even the commonplace sensory images that are supposed to arise in the mind as mental pictures of the external things are for Zen nothing but dream images. To see a flower, for instance, as a flower and recognize it as a flower existing in the external world is, from the Zen point of view, to have a dream of a flower.

If such is the case, should we say that Zen would have nothing to do with images? Indeed, superficially and at first glance, it seems as if Zen would dismiss at one stroke all images as mental fabrications, entirely useless or even positively harmful except for purposes of practical life. As a matter of fact, the Zen discipline, at least at its initial stages, may be said to consist in wiping out all sensory images methodically and systematically from the mind. The images go on being eliminated one after another as they arise in the mind in contemplation until finally a state of complete imagelessness is reached. That precisely is the No-Image of Zen.

All this, however, should not be taken to mean that Zen simply dispenses with imagery. Quite the contrary; images do play an exceedingly important role in the Zen experience of reality as Reality. True, the sensory images are dreamlike pictures of reality. To see a flower as a flower is to have a dream of a flower, not to see it as it really is. In order to see the reality of a flower, we must, according to Zen, learn to see it as a no-flower. That is to say, we must bring the sensory image of a flower back to the stage of No-Image, where the flower would no longer be seen as a flower.

But this does not exhaust the whole process of the Zen experience of Reality. We are urged to go a step further and see how this No-Image into which all images have dissolved, has its own positive way of realizing itself constantly in concrete images. The flower which has turned into a no-flower comes out again into the world of sensory experience, emphatically re-asserting its real existence as a flower. The point is, however, that the flower this time is not a mere sensory image of a flower, but that it is the No-Image in the process of actualizing itself moment by moment in the form of an image of a flower. In this state, there is absolutely no discrepancy between the image of a flower and the thing called a flower. The image *is* the thing. The image is here no longer a screen intervening between the mind and the externally existent thing, and thereby presenting a distorted picture of the latter to the former. Rather, the emergence of the image out of the No-Image is directly and in itself the

emergence of the thing.

In this sense, and from this point of view, the way images function in the construction of the Zen world-view may, I think, rightly be said to be "ontological." The Zen images are, in short, ontological images. Or we might say, images are important and significant to Zen only in this capacity.

Thus we have, in the foregoing, distinguished between three kinds of images: 1. the hermeneutic images (the *I Ching*), 2. the mythopoeic-metaphysical images (Taoism) and 3. the ontological images (Zen Buddhism). Our task will now consist in elaborating what has just been stated in broad outlines into three systematic and coherent theories of image representative of these three major schools of Far Eastern philosophy.

Before proceeding to this task, however, I would like to stop for a moment and say a few words, by way of preliminaries, about the significance and relevance of the problem of image to the contemporary situation of philosophy in general.

II

As one of the most remarkable features of the present-day science and scholarship we may mention the extraordinary interest shown in the symbolic nature of the human mind. Symbolization or symbol-making has come to be recognized as the key to open the secret door of the human mind. Remarkable discoveries have been made on the basis of this assumption, new ideas and theories have been proposed in various fields of study, and even new branches of science are rapidly developing.

The very concept of man has begun to change under the pressure of this universal tendency in science and philosophy. As a matter of fact, the age-old Aristotelian or scholastic definition of man as a "rational animal" seems to be fast losing its footing to be superseded by new ones standing on the idea of symbolism like: "Man is a symbol-making animal," "Man is a myth-making animal," etc.

In conformity with the spirit of this general, markedly symbolistic tendency of the contemporary thinking in science and philosophy, we could, I think, provisionally define man in somewhat wider and more general terms as "an image-producing and image-using animal." I consider this definition more general or more comprehensive than the above-mentioned ones, for "symbol" and "myth" are after all but special forms of image.

Image or imaging seems to belong to the fundamental mechanism of the human mind, underlying as it does the whole working system of what is called the "mental." Taking the word "image" in its psychological sense, we might say that the image-making function is the primal activity of the human mind, essential, not reducible to any other need than its own. It would seem that, pushed by its innate, intrinsic need, the human mind is constantly and incessantly producing images at various levels of consciousness and putting them to various uses, so much so that even while we are asleep our mind carries on the work of producing dream-images. In this perspective, the human mind is nothing but a deluge of images.

One of the profoundest causes which brings about such a situation seems to lie in the fact that man cannot stand to live in a world entirely devoid of meaning. And "meaning" in this context is synonymous with "order." But for the sake of having an order of any kind, the world of Being must first be articulated into more or less clearly distinguishable units so that they might then be put in systematic relation to one another. And image or imaging is the primary and highly elaborated means in the possession of the human mind for articulating reality.

Duped by the activity of our own mind, we tend to believe that we are living in a meaningful world which is ordered from the very beginning, inherently and objectively structured in a definite way, with things, attributes, states and process definitely determined by their essences. In truth, however, this seemingly intrinsic order of the world is but a subjective fabrication. The immediate reality, what is initially given, is a welter of sense impressions, a tremendous tangle

of incoherent and elusive sense-data. Left in this original state, our experience of reality "makes no sense." Under such conditions we would simply be living in a meaningless, i.e., orderless world. Or rather, the word "world" itself would make no sense, for "world" just means a meaningful whole of all things.

The essential mechanism of the mind, however, is such that it immediately transforms this bewildering chaos of sense-data into an ordered world by producing within itself sensory images having their structural basis in the semantic evocations of words. The sensory images manifest their primary function in transforming the incoherent jumble of sense impressions into a set of cognitive units, and thereby creating there a first-stage order. And thus starts what a school of contemporary philosophers has called the "symbolic transformation" of the immediately given content of sensory experience. It will be evident that the "symbolic transformation" here in question is nothing other than the process of the semantic articulation, through the production and use of images, of the "immediately given" which is in itself totally inarticulate.

The articulation of reality begins in this way at the level of sensory experience. The sense-image is the means of articulation at this level. It creates an ordered world — a primarily ordered world. Reality thereby becomes primarily meaningful to us. For good or evil, however, this fact has deep, far-reaching philosophic implications.

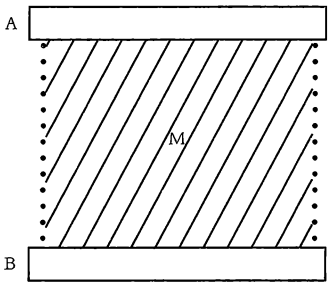
Ordinarily we remain unaware of the working of images in our sense-experiences. We are prone to think that we are in direct contact with external things. A tree is there in my presence, and I simply perceive it as it *really* is. I tend to imagine that there is nothing in the space between myself and the tree. In so imagining I fail to notice the interpolation of an image between me and the object. The truth of the matter is that whenever we perceive in the external world some thing, a tree, for instance, we necessarily do so through the veil of an image which presents the thing variously modified in accordance with its semantic configuration. And the semantic configuration of an image is a product of interactions between the meanings of all

words that have come to be associated with each other in their actual usage in designating, and making reference to, the object.

The upshot of all this is that reality, whatever it may be, can never be experienced by us except indirectly. Even in the case of the perception of a single object like a tree, we perceive it already interpreted through an image which intervenes between us and direct experience. Without the intervening image of a tree, for example, a tree can never be perceived and recognized as a tree. Being unaware of this transforming activity of the image, we ordinarily take it for granted that we perceive the things in the external world in their objective reality, as if they were there in exactly the form in which we perceive them. As I have pointed out several times in the past here at Eranos, it is, of all the schools of thought in the Far East, Zen Buddhism that has grappled with this problem directly and most seriously as *the* philosophical problem relating to the ontological status of the so-called external world. What I have just said is the reason why Zen disparages at a stroke the ordinary sensory experience of things in the external world, saying that it is completely unsubstantial. But of this I shall have later a more appropriate occasion to talk. For the time being I shall continue the theoretical consideration of the nature and function of images which I have started.

The sense-images which we have been discussing are not the only kind of images the human mind produces and uses. There are other kinds of images that are produced at other levels of consciousness to be put to other uses than sensing and perceiving. This, however, is not the place for studying exhaustively the different kinds of images. In fact, one of them only is important for the purposes of the present paper: the mythic or mythopoeic image, to which, therefore, I shall confine my attention.

In order that we might elucidate in a succinct manner the characteristic features of mythopoeic images, which distinguish them from ordinary, i.e., sensory images, I would propose here to construct a very simple model of consciousness consisting of two strata: the



upper stratum or the level of perceptual cognition (*A*), and the lower stratum or the depth level of consciousness (*B*), and the middle region (*M*) placed between the upper and lower strata.

The upper stratum of this model (*A*) represents the domain of waking consciousness, the "surface of the mind," which is precisely what is normally referred to by the word "consciousness." It is the domain of consciousness in which the sense-images perform their proper functions.

The lower stratum (*B*), on the contrary, is what would correspond to the *ālaya-vijñāna* or Storehouse Consciousness, of the Yogācāra School of Mahāyāna Buddhism, about some important aspects of which I talked here last year. It is the depth-level of consciousness. If we are to speak metaphorically of the "daylight" consciousness in reference to the upper stratum of the model, the lower stratum would have to be characterized as the twilight zone of consciousness or inner region of nocturnal darkness.

In reference to this dark region of consciousness or the unconscious, Gilbert Durand in his *L'Imagination Symbolique* (Paris, 1968) makes a significant remark, namely, that one of the important modern scientific disciplines, which he calls "sociological hermeneutics" and which is at present fast developing on the model of general linguistics, completely agrees with psychoanalysis in recognizing an "unconscious infrastructure" (*infrastructure inconsciente*) that lies hidden under the structure of the phenomenal world. And M. Durand

attaches a deep, fundamental significance to this unconscious stratum of the mind as the "organ of symbolic structuralizations" (*l'organe de la structuration symbolique*). According to him, in other words, the world of Being gets symbolically structured by the activity of the unconscious. The unconscious is a special psychic organ by which the crudely material and physical world becomes metamorphosed into a symbolic world of myth and poetry.

All this is certainly true. With a view to developing a coherent theory of image, however, and especially from the viewpoint of the Yogācāra School, we must, I think, add to this the following remarks. The depth region of the unconscious corresponding to the *B*-stratum in our model does not function merely as the symbolic transformator of the empirical world which is already given in a definite form of its own as a product of sensory experiences in the *A*-stratum of consciousness. Rather, the world of sensory experience itself must in a certain sense be considered a creation of the *B*-stratum.

According to the view entertained by the Yogācāra School on the structure of the human psyche, the *ālaya-vijñāna* is a depository of the semantic effects left by all the words that have been actually or virtually used in the past. I say: "actually or virtually used," because the "semantic effects" here in question are not restricted to those left by words actually spoken, but the phrase covers also the traces left by non-verbal actions insofar as they are nameable, i.e., linguistically distinguishable. The idea is that whatever one has said or done whether internally or externally, necessarily leaves its mark behind in the infrastructure of consciousness (the *B*-stratum) called the Storehouse Consciousness, so that the latter functions as it were as a general depository of the semantic effects left by the words, both actual and virtual, which are accumulated there, remaining alive in the form of what the Yogācāra philosophers call *bīja* or "seeds."

It is characteristic of those *bīja*, or psychic seeds in the Yogācāra view that they have an inherent tendency to transform themselves into concrete images whenever occasions arises. In the perception of the so-called external world, for instance, some of the *bīja* get into a

state of semantic excitation and, transforming themselves immediately into images, come up to the surface-level of consciousness, the *A*-stratum of our model, to work there in such a way that a particular perceptual order is brought about out of a chaotic stream of sense-impressions. As a result, things appear clearly delineated, qualities are recognized, and events observed in the external world. Needless to say, the "external world" itself is a product of a symbolic transformation of *bīja* such as has just been described.

There is thus a very close and intimate relationship between the *A*-stratum and *B*-stratum of consciousness. The working of the *A*-stratum is inseparably related to the working of the *B*-stratum. For, as has just been observed, the actual working of the *A*-stratum is structurally dependent on the semantic actuation of the image-producing *bīja* in the depths of the *B*-stratum. To put the matter in somewhat more concrete terms, without the surface level of consciousness being worked upon by the formative and transformative activity of *bīja*-images, there can possibly be no perception of "external" things.

In the case of the perception of external things, however, the images that originate in the *B*-stratum usually come up straight to the *A*-stratum, making their appearance at that level and making at the same time the "external things" appear instantaneously in sensible forms. So quick is this process that it seems as if there were no distance between the two strata of consciousness, as if everything took place in the *A*-stratum alone. Even the presence of images normally remains unnoticed unless special attention is directed toward them.

This, however, is not always the case. The distance separating the *A*-stratum from the *B* sometimes comes into clear view, when the *B*-stratum of consciousness becomes activated in a peculiar manner, as when, for instance, one is in a state of shamanic ecstasy, contemplative concentration, or magico-religious excitation. In cases of this kind, images emerge of their own accord out of the *B*-stratum of consciousness, irrespective of whether there be external stimuli or not.

Even where there are external stimuli recognizable at the initial stage of origination, the images, once produced, follow independently their own course of evolvement.

Moreover, these images reveal themselves to be of quite a different nature from those adjusted to the activity of the sense organs. They are mythic, mythopoeic, archetypal, or symbolic images which owe their peculiarity to their being essentially adjusted to the very structure of the *B*-stratum of consciousness and directly reflecting it, instead of being in accord with the structural configuration of the *A*-stratum.

Thus it comes about that whereas the sensory images are in the majority of cases commonplace, stereotyped images — and this is one of the reasons why their presence usually remains unnoticed — the symbolic ones tend to be conspicuously uncommon, fantastic and often even bizarre and grotesque.

There is, however, a fact which is more important for the theory of image I am thinking of and which is more directly relevant to the present context in particular: namely that, unlike the sensory images, the symbolic ones, emerging from the darkness of the *B*-stratum of consciousness, do not go up straight to the *A*-stratum, but remain as a rule lingering between the two strata. The psychic space (designated as *M* in the above-given diagram) between the *A*-stratum and the *B* is, so to speak, the house of the symbolic images so that it is peopled with a tremendous number of extraordinary figures such as superhuman heroes, angels, devils, monsters, mythic animals and the like.

The middle region which is thus a real *mundus imaginalis* or *'ālam al-mithāl*, separates the two strata of consciousness from one another and unites them with one another at one and the same time. It separates them from one another in that the images hovering about in this region are strikingly — or sometimes shockingly — different from the stereotyped figures which we normally encounter in the *A*-stratum. But, on the other hand, it unites the two with one

another in that the images there also present sensible forms, no matter how fantastic and uncommon they might be. And the contradictory unity of these two aspects, separation and union of the *A*-stratum and the *B*-stratum of consciousness simultaneously realized in those images, the inhabitants of the *mundus imaginalis*, is precisely what makes them "symbolic." And the particular semantic tension arising from the mutual repulsion and attraction between the two strata of consciousness is what characteristically distinguishes them from the ordinary sensory images in which the impact of the *B*-stratum on the *A*-stratum is reduced to the minimum.

The images that properly belong in the *M*-region are characterized by another important trait, which consists in their being by nature dynamic. By this I am referring to the fact that they manifest a natural tendency to evolve. In contrast to the sensory images which are essentially static and fixed, the symbolic images are prone to develop and expand into symbolic stories like fairy tales, legends and myths. The image of a Dragon once formed, for instance, it cannot but ooze out, as it were, around itself a peculiar atmosphere of *mythopoesis* in which a "sacred" story develops itself with a Dragon as its central figure. In the Dragon-image attached to the first Hexagram in the *I Ching* we observe this myth-making nature of the symbolic images in its most elementary form. Examples of the evolvement of symbolic images in more elaborate and sophisticated forms are found in profusion in the *Chuang-tzŭ*.

It is to be remarked that by evolving into a myth, symbolic images produce in the *M*-region a peculiar vision of reality, a symbolic picture of reality. The symbolic reality thus produced is remarkably different from what we commonly regard as the immediate reality of things. The world of Being in this vision appears articulated in an essentially different manner from the sensory articulation of the empirical world. For the articulation of reality is here made not only in different forms, but the very principle upon which the articulation is made is different. The symbolic articulation of reality serves

apparently no practical or pragmatic purposes, so that the world-view which comes out as a result would appear to our common sense as an imaginary picture, a sheer fantasy. But for those who attach a deep significance, psychological as well as philosophical, to the working of the *B*-stratum of consciousness and the *M*-region, the symbolic images which make their appearance in the mythopoeic space of that psychic domain are extremely valuable in that the figures of the things looming up through the mist of these images do represent the primeval configurations of a reality which are psychically far more real and more relevant to the fate and existence of man than the sensory reality established at the surface level of consciousness. The world-vision presented by the images of the *M*-region is, in other words, a direct reflection of reality as it is viewed at a deeper level of consciousness, and as such it reveals the primeval structure of Being which remains hidden from the view of the empirical eyes which essentially remain attached to the *A*-stratum of consciousness. This point will be elucidated at a later stage when I shall discuss the metaphysical status of the symbolic images in the *Chuang-tzŭ*.

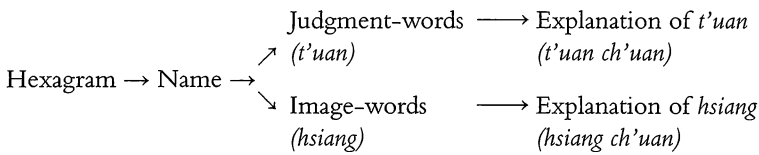
III

Following the general plan proposed at the outset, I shall now turn to the *I Ching*, Classical Taoism of Lao-tzŭ — Chuang-tzŭ, and Zen Buddhism, each representing an important aspect of Far Eastern thought and potentially containing within itself a peculiar theory of image. The first to take up is the *I Ching*.

The ancient Chinese book of divination which we now know under the name of the *I Ching* consists of several parts which, coming from different sources, were incorporated into the *I Ching* system at different periods of the historical formation of the book extending over several centuries. Leaving aside all such historico-philological considerations, however, which are a matter of no essential concern to the subject of the present paper, I shall here approach the *I Ching* from a synchronic point of view, treating it as a complex of a number

of different parts placed side by side and integrated into a unified whole.

The main divinatory text of the Book of *I Ching*, in such a synchronic perspective, is found to consist concretely of six major sections to each of which is assigned a particular place in the system in the following order.



A Hexagram (1) is an abstract symbol composed of six lines, broken and unbroken, like ䷂ for example. In terms of the *I Ching* divination it is a non-verbal oracle which is initially given on the diviner, whereas in terms of the *I Ching* philosophy it indicates non-verbally an ontological or psychic archetype. As every one knows there are sixty-four such archetype-indicators or Hexagrams in the *I Ching*.

This non-verbal symbol becomes verbalized for the first time at the next stage, the Name (2). The name of the particular Hexagram given above, for example, is *kou* meaning roughly an unexpected encounter. The archetype or archetypal situation that has been indicated abstractly and indeterminately by the Hexagram discloses its name at this stage: "Encounter." It is to be noted that as soon as the name is disclosed, an image appears — the image of a woman (a Yin line) encountering five men (five Yang lines).

The process of the verbalization of the non-verbal symbol still goes on, and at the stage of the *t'uan* or judgment-words (3) the *I Ching* makes verbally clear what is concretely meant by the name in terms of divination. A verbal oracle is here given. And it is further explicated by the *t'uan ch'uan* or explanation of the judgment words (5).

In contrast to the *t'uan* which indicates in the capacity of an oracle the global situation symbolized by the Hexagram, the *hsiang* or

Image-words (4) are a partial oracle concerned with the nature of a partial situation within the whole of a Hexagrammic situation, which is symbolized by each one of the six lines constituting the Hexagram. The *hsiang*-words are further explicated by the *hsiang ch'uan* (6).

Excluding the *t'uan ch'uan* and *hsiang ch'uan* which are evidently nothing but commentaries and which are properly to be treated as part of the large commentarial part of the Book, we must say that the main divinatory text of the *I Ching*, or the primitive corpus of the *I Ching* oracles, consists of four sections: Hexagram, Name, *t'uan* and *hsiang*.

It is important to remark for the purposes of the present paper that these four sections of the main divinatory text of the *I Ching* arranged in the above-mentioned order, beginning with Hexagram and ending with *hsiang*, are of such a nature that they, as a system of divination, represent a process of verbalization, that is to say, a process by which an initially given non-verbal oracle gradually becomes transformed into a full-fledged verbal oracle. It is in each case a process of the verbalization of the non-verbal. Verbalization here means verbal interpretation. And the verbal interpretation is in the case of the *I Ching* primarily image-making, or more exactly, evocation of symbolic images through words. The original No-Image thereby turns into an image.

It is to be observed that, in terms of the structural model of consciousness which I have proposed to use in this paper, the transformation of a Hexagrammic No-Image into an image invariably takes place in the *M*-region, i.e., the psychic space between the *A*-stratum and the *B*-stratum. And the image thus produced is, as I stated above, essentially "hermeneutic," in the sense that it is a product of the symbolic evolvement of an originally imageless Hexagram through a gradual process of verbal interpretation.

What has just been said about the interpretation of the Hexagrams purports to elucidate the process by which symbolic images emerge out of the *B*-stratum of consciousness to fill in the vacancy provided

by the abstract forms of the Hexagrams — the process being envisaged exclusively as a structural event in total disregard of how these abstract forms were first established and how verbal oracles came to be attached to them in the historical formation of the Book of *I Ching*. In order to throw particular light upon the peculiarly "symbolic" nature of the *I Ching* images, I have to add a few words concerning the historical aspect of the problem, too.

It is to be noted in this respect that the art of divination in the oldest periods of Chinese history known to us was entirely in the hands of shaman officials attached to the Court. The construction of the formal system of the sixty-four Hexagrams as well as their primary verbalization in the form of oracles formulated in words are all due to the Court shamans who, in remote antiquity, were specifically, i.e., professionally, engaged in the work of divination. This historical connection with shamanism will to a great extent account for the peculiar nature of the symbolism of the images associated with, and evoked by, the Hexagrams. In other words, the Hexagrammic images we actually find recorded in the Book of *I Ching* are each a symbolic image that once emerged out of the depths of the mind — the "*B*-stratum of consciousness" in our terminology — in a state of shamanic exciation, spurred by a psychic drive to find a meaning in a seemingly meaningless combination of six lines, which exactly is a Hexagram.

In terms of our model of consciousness, again, the middle region between the *A*-stratum and the *B*, in which the *I Ching* images find their proper place for existence and activity, is saturated with a dense shamanic atmosphere caused by the attitude of the mind turning wholly toward divination. The images do not go up to the *A*-stratum to serve the purpose of perceiving things in the external world. Instead, they remain in the middle region, performing there an entirely different function, namely, that of a symbolic re-structuralization of the world of Being in direct accordance with the primordial, archetypal configuration of Reality with which man and his fate are inescapably bound up with invisible threads.

Let us at this point go back to our synchronic observation of how the primitive corpus of the *I Ching* oracles is constituted as a symbolic system representing a process by which the original "silence" turns into language and the No-Image into images. The whole thing may be regarded as a hermeneutic evolvement of the Hexagrams, a process of their spontaneous self-interpretation through the production of images.

In fact, whoever opens the pages of the *I Ching* finds himself in a world of swarming images. He encounters there all kinds of images, ranging from images of ordinary, familiar things and beings to the bizarre and uncouth figures of monsters, spirits and ghosts.

Strangely enough, however, the system of the *I Ching* at its initial stage is a serene world of absolute silence completely devoid of imagery. For, as I have pointed out more than once, what is initially given in the *I Ching*, that from which everything starts, is an organized whole of abstract structures consisting of mathematical combinations of two primary symbols, the broken and unbroken lines called respectively the Yin line and Yang line. It is a system of purely formal, abstract symbols, sixty-four in number and called Hexagrams, which are, taken in themselves, semantically void and as such imageless.

Who could, in fact, suspect under the surface of the Hexagram 44 ䷫ the hidden presence of the vivacious image of a lean pig whose inborn nature is such that, if left unbound, it will surely rage around? But this is actually how the *hsiang* or "Image-words" verbalize the semantic content of this particular line. The text reads:

> A broken line in the lowest position.
> The chariot wheel held with a bronze drag.
> If it is allowed to move ahead, misfortune
> will come. A lean pig is indeed raging about.

Or who could, by merely looking at the abstract form of this same Hexagram, as a whole, discern there the image of a woman whose

conduct is dangerously unrestrained and licentious, as is clearly indicated by the Judgment-words?

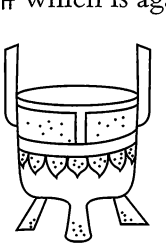
Such, however, is in truth the basic make-up of the Hexagrammic system as regards the emergence of symbolic images out of the vacant, imageless forms. Every Hexagram is essentially translatable into an overall image, while each one of the six component lines is structurally so made that it evokes in its own way an image or a series of images which develop, amplify or ramify the overall image initially evoked by the Hexagram. This, be it noted, is made possible by the fact that each of the sixty-four Hexagrams, though outwardly vacant, is internally an archetypal form ready to be filled in by symbolic images arising from an incessant metamorphosis of the psychic energy induced by the archetypal excitation of the *B*-stratum of consciousness. Thus the emergence of concrete images out of a Hexagram and its component lines is a result of a symbolic transformation or self-interpretation of these abstract forms, which is nothing other than a self-revelation of the archetypal structure of reality as an aspect of the *mundus imaginalis*.

The symbolic and verbal interpretation of the Hexagrammic forms begins at the above-mentioned stage of Name. The giving of a particular name to a Hexagram is the starting point of the whole process of turning the imageless into an image. A particular name given, the Hexagram immediately evokes an image. This might seem quite natural and simple, for a name necessarily has a meaning, and meaning is necessarily evocative of an image. But in the concrete context of the *I Ching* symbolism, the matter is not as simple as that. The evocation of an image or images at the stage of Name is complicated, to begin with, by the pictographic evocation peculiar to Chinese characters used to designate the names of the Hexagrams. As everybody knows, the name of a Hexagram in the *I Ching* is indicated by a particular character of characters. In many cases these characters are just phonetic signs formalized to the extreme limit of being like combinations of Latin alphabets. Sometimes, however, the characters do function as pictographs. And in such a case, they

directly influence the emergence of images in a very characteristic way.

Just to give here one of the simplest examples, the Hexagram 47 *Kun* meaning adverse circumstances or the dark mood of despondency of a man who has fallen into an adverse situation from which he sees no way out. The Chinese character indicating this word is 困 which is a pictogram consisting of a tree 木 (米 the upper part representing the trunk of a tree with branches spreading out, and the lower part the ramification of its root) and an enclosure surrounding the tree on all sides. The character pictorially represents a tree whose natural growth is completely obstructed. And this inevitably determines and influences the concrete form assumed by the image emerging from the name.

Here is another, somewhat more complicated example. The reference is to Hexagram 50 whose name is revealed to be *ting* meaning caldron. The character used to indicate this word is 鼎 which is again a pictograph structurally reflecting a real caldron, a large bronze vessel in which viands are cooked to be offered by the king to the spirits of the ancestors in the sacrificial temple and the royal guests at banquets, a precious utensil believed to be imbued with a religious or magical force.



And once this basic image is established, the abstract structure of the Hexagram ䷱ is interpreted in accordance with it. The lowest Yin line represents the legs of the caldron, the three Yang lines in the middle its belly, the Yin line over the three lines its ears, and the topmost Yang line the rings with which the caldron is carried.

It sometimes happens also that the meaning of the name itself, even without the aid of the pictograph, activates the hidden symbolism of the Hexagram so that out of the formal structure of the six lines there looms up an unexpected image affecting in a peculiar way the overall or partial images. The Hexagram 62 *hsiao kuo* meaning roughly the "preponderance of the small," evokes by its very form, ䷽

an image of a small and weak bird trying to fly high up into the sky, the two Yang lines in the middle indicating the body of the bird whereas the two sets of double Yin above and below symbolize the two wings spread apart. But these wings are entirely made of Yin elements, which suggests their natural weakness. The bird cannot, and should not, try to fly high. This state of affairs becomes explicitly verbalized at the next stage of interpretation, i.e., that of the judgment-words, the verbal oracle attached to the Hexagram, which reads:

> (The present situation is) good for small things,
> but not good for great things.
> The flying bird leaves its voice behind (i.e.,
> it flies up too high). It is not well to go so
> high up. It is well to come downward.

In the limited space of this paper I cannot go into more details, but enough, I think, has been said to show how subtly complicated is the image-producing mechanism of the Hexagrams even at the stage of naming. The images evoked in this way go on being expanded and developed through the successive stages of interpretation which I have outlined earlier, and by the time they reach the culminating point of the process, what was initially a purely abstract, mathematical disposition of imageless symbols is found to have transformed into a colorful world of symbolic images.

IV

With this we leave the *I Ching* and turn to the image world of Lao-tzŭ and Chuang-tzŭ, the two greatest representatives of Classical Taoism.

Let us begin by observing that all symbolic images are by nature evolutive. That is to say, it belongs to their essential make-up that they manifest a marked tendency, wherever possible, to evolve and

develop into stories, tales and myths. In the *I Ching* the symbolic images could not fully manifest this tendency because of the nature of the Book, where the main text consists of short oracular utterances, the very form of which cannot but put impediments in the way of symbolic images expanding themselves into continuous narratives. But even under these unfavorable conditions, some of the images could manage to evolve through the six stages represented by the six lines of a Hexagram into a story-like or myth-like form of discourse. A typical example is afforded by the Dragon-image of the Hexagram 1. The gradual growth of the Dragon from immaturity to full maturity depicted in the structural evolvement of the Hexagram through its six stages is evidently a *mythopoesis*. But the story of the inner development of the Dragon is too short and too simplified to be called an authenitic myth. Besides, examples of this kind are rather rare in the *I Ching*. In the majority of cases, images are not given enough space to be able to develop; they usually remain isolated and non-evolutive.

With Taoism, and particularly with Chuang-tzŭ, we step into a world of evolutive images unobstructedly growing everywhere into symbolic tales and myths. The images here are authentically mythopoeic.

That the Taoist images are authentically mythopoeic implies not only that extraordinary symbolic images emerge endlessly and in profusion out of what corresponds to the *B*-stratum in our model and fill up the *M*-region, but that in that symbolic space of the psyche they form among themselves relationships entirely different from the empirical relationships among the sensory images, which we are accustomed to seeing in ordinary life. And under such non-empirical conditions, these images follow their own course in developing spontaneously in accordance with the archetypal patterns inherent in themselves. Such, in brief, is the formal structure of the Taoist *mythopoesis*.

But that which truly characterizes the Taoist *mythopoesis*, definitely distinguishing it from all other types of myth-making is the fact that

in the case of Taoism the emergence and development of the mythic images is invariably backed by a peculiar metaphysical experience of existence. The Taoist *mythopoesis* is a direct reflection of a metaphysical vision of reality as it evolves from Non-Being to phenomenal Being. And this process may properly be described as a process of the evolvement of reality from the stage of No-Image to that of images.

The Non-Being or No-Image which is experientially realized at the extreme limit of contemplation and which is for Chuang-tzŭ the metaphysical fusion of all things into a state of total undifferentiation finds its expression somewhat paradoxically in the imageless image of "chaos" containing within itself the possibility of a mythopoeic evolvement of symbolic images. The myth which may rightly be called the "Myth of Chaos" reads as follows:

> The name of the Emperor of the South Sea was Brief (*Shu*).
> The name of the Emperor of the North Sea was Momentary (*Hu*).
> The Emperor of the central empire was called Chaos (*Hun Tun*).
> Once, Emperor Brief and Emperor Momentary met in the empire of Emperor Chaos, who treated both of them with perfect hospitality. Thereupon, Brief and Momentary deliberated together over the way in which they might possibly repay his kindness. "All men," they said, "are possessed of seven orifices for seeing, hearing, eating, and breathing. Chaos alone does not possess any orifice. Come, let us bore some in his face!" So they went on boring one orifice every day, until on the seventh day Chaos died. (*Chuang-tzŭ*, VII.)

It is interesting to observe that this Taoist myth of the death of Chaos has two sides turning toward two different origins: mythological and metaphysical. In the first of these two directions, the myth directly connects with the world of ancient mythology as we find it in the *Shan Hai Ching*, the "Book of Mountains and Seas," a famous book of Chinese mythology which describes the mythological monsters and spirits that were believed to live in mountains and seas.

In the description given in this book Chaos (*Hun Tun*) makes its appearance in the form of a hideous monster-bird having no features

on the face.

> Three hundred and fifty miles further to the west there is a mountain called Heaven Mountain. The mountain produces much gold and jade. It also produces blue sulphide. The River Ying takes its origin here, and it meanders southwestward until it flows into the valley of Boiling Water.
>
> Now in this mountain there lives a divine Bird whose body is like a yellow sack, red as burning fire, having six legs and four wings. The Bird is completely amorphous (*hun tun*, "chaos"), having no eyes, no feature. But the Bird is very good at singing and dancing.

The myth is evidently of shamanic orgin. The monster being a bird good at singing and dancing immediately reminds us of shamanic ritual sessions in which singing and feather-dancing often play an important role for inducing in the shaman-priest the state of ecstasy. Besides the Bird is said to have a blank, featureless face, a symbolic way of referring to the inner Void realized in the shaman in a state of trance. There can be no doubt that Emperor Chaos whose face is said to have no feature is, in its mythological aspect, most closely connected with this kind of visionary experiences of ecstatic shamans.

On the other hand, however, the image of Chaos in the *Chuang-tzŭ*, has another, philosophical aspect. And in that aspect the featureless face of Emperor Chaos is a mythic image symbolizing the primordial "chaotic" unity of Being, an ontological state in which all things, loosing their phenomenal boundaries, interpenetrate each other and interfuse with one another until ultimately they disappear into the metaphysical darkness of Non-Being. And in terms of this metaphysics of Non-Being, the death of Emperor Chaos could be nothing other than a symbolic presentation of the way the world of Being, i.e., the world of phenomenal distinctions and differentiation comes into view by the very "death," i.e., the disintegration of the metaphysical Chaos. Lao-tzŭ remarks:

> Non-Being is the ultimate source of Being, and Being is the source of all things in the empirical world.

> The ten thousand things under Heaven are born out of Non-Being. (XL)

So says Lao-tzŭ. But in order to produce Being, and through Being, the ten thousand things under Heaven, Non-Being must die. It is to be remarked that Emperor Chaos died on the spot when the six orifices were bored in his face. His face had been entirely featureless — no eyes, no ears, no nose, no mouth; indeed nothing had been distinguishable there. This is a symbolic way of saying that reality in its primordial state has absolutely no articulation. As soon as it is articulated, its metaphysical purity is lost, and the ontological articulation brings into being the phenomenal world of multiplicity in which things are distinguished from one another and thereby stand opposed to one another. The death of the metaphysical Non-Being and the birth of the phenomenal things — between these two poles Chuang-tzŭ sees the cosmic drama of existence being constantly and ceaselessly enacted. It will be interesting to remark in this connection that the names of the two Emperors who commit the "fatal mistake" of boring orifices in the face of Chaos and thereby killing him, *Shu* and *Hu*, meaning respectively "brief" and "momentary," clearly suggest that they are representative of the phenomenal world in which nothing remains permanent.

However, to speak of Life and Death in reference to the emergence of the empirical world is nothing but presenting the matter in a peculiar, mythopoeic light. Philosophically and more strictly speaking, there is here neither Life nor Death. For Non-Being and Being are ultimately one and the same thing viewed from two different angles. Says Lao-tzŭ:

> In the eternal and real Non-Being one would see Tao in its unfathomable profundity, while in the eternal and real Being one would see it in various determinations. These two are originally one and the same. But once externalized, they assume different names (i.e., "Non-Being" and "Being"). In the originated state in which these two are absolutely the same, Tao is to be called the Mystery. The Mystery of all mysteries it really is. (I)

Thus Reality in the eyes of Lao-tzŭ has two apparently opposite aspects: Non-Being and Being. Non-Being is the metaphysical region where there is no figure of anything whatsoever. In this respect it is referred to by Lao-tzŭ as the Nameless.

The Nameless is the Imageless, the No-Images. But in the unfathomable depths of the Imageless, the mind in contemplation senses a faint and indistinct presence of Something.

> Deep and bottomless, it is like the ancestor of the ten thousand things.
> There is nothing, and yet there seems to be Something.
> .....
> Like a deep mass of water it is (i.e., nothing is visible on the surface),
> yet Something seems to be hidden there.
> I know not who has produced it.
> But its image was there even before God. (IV)

Lao-tzŭ is here trying to describe in extremely impressive poetic words a subtle point in metaphysical experience at which Non-Being turns into Being. There is as yet nothing visible — no name, no image. But Something is felt to be there — a formless Form, nameless Name, imageless Image.

And out of this mysterious imageless Image there emerge archetypal images, vaguely and almost imperceptibly at first, but as they continue to grow and evolve, they go on assuming more and more definite forms until finally they spread themselves out in the phenomenal dimension of Being as innumerable sensory images representing the "ten thousand things under Heaven."

But before they reach this final stage of evolvement, where they become unalterably articulated at the surface level, i.e., the *A*-stratum of consciousness, they go through a vast field — indeed an "infinitely vast field" as Chuang-tzŭ says — of free symbolic transformation peculiar to *mythopoesis*. There, in the atmosphere of absolute freedom, the images associate, intermingle, and interfuse with one another according to their own law of symbolic evolvement, drawing among themselves and by themselves mythopoeic pictures of Reality. From the standpoint of a Lao-tzŭ or a Chuang-tzŭ, these

mythopoeic pictures, being essentially archetypal, reflect more faithfully or more fundamentally the true structure of reality than what is afforded by sensation, perception and reason.

V

Turning now to Zen Buddhism, we shall begin by noticing the most fundamental difference between it and Taoism with regard to the problem of the image-producing mechanism of the mind. As we have observed, the world of Taoism is a world of symbolic images which unfold themselves mythopoeically in a vast intermediary space extending between the No-Image and the domain of sensory images. In terms of the structural model of consciousness we have been using, till now, we may briefly describe the state of affairs by saying that in the case of Taoism a long distance separates the *B*-stratum and *A*-stratum of consciousness from one another. That is to say, the archetypal images that are generated in the *B*-stratum do not directly go out to the phenomenal surface of the *A*-stratum. Instead, they tend to remain lingering on the way, creating in the *M*-region a peculiar mythopoeic world of their own.

In Zen Buddhism, on the contrary, there is no such distance recognized between the two strata of consciousness. The *B*-stratum is directly connected with the *A*-stratum. There is no intermediary space, or if there is, it is passed through in the twinkling of an eye, leaving no place for symbolization, let alone myth-making. The No-Image is constantly expressing itself in images, but they are not evolutive; they come and go instantaneously. The images arising from the No-Image go straight up to the empirical dimension of experience and create there on the spot the phenomenal world. The famous opening lines of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* succinctly express this Zen point of view, saying that the phenomenal world is no other than the metaphysical Nothing while the metaphysical Nothing is no other than the phenomenal world.

For the purpose of adding clarity to the characteristic features of

the Zen theory of image in contrast to Taoism, I would propose at this point to review what has been said in the preceding concerning the theoretical distinction between the two kinds of images: 1. symbolic-mythopoeic images and 2. cognitive-ontological images.

The first kind consists of images which are peculiar to the psychic space indicated in our model as the *M*-region. They are symbolic images whose nature is such that they find in the *M*-region their proper abode. Remaining within the boundaries of this inner region, they evolve and develop mythopoeically. "Dragon" is a typical example of this kind of image. As will be obvious, it is essentially attached to the *M*-region. Its very nature prevents it from coming up to the *A*-stratum of consciousness and making the latter perceive a particular thing in the empirical world. If by any chance it happens to do so, it only produces there a phantom or illusion having no ontological basis.

The cognitive-ontological images, on the contrary, — although they, too, could very well be used as elements of *mythopoesis* — have their proper function in coming up directly to the *A*-stratum of consciousness, causing there a phenomenal experience of an external reality. The images of the earth, for example, the sun, a tree and the like, do appear from time to time as important elements of myths, but their function is primarily and essentially of an epistemic and ontological nature. That is to say, they serve to transform on the spot the chaotic indeterminancies of sense-data into more or less determinate figures of phenomenal things. This transformation of a crudely amorphous reality into a structure of definite entities is an ontological-epistemic process by which the so-called external things become articulated and perceived each as such-and-such a thing.

Now Zen Buddhism is not at all interested in the first kind of images, the symbolic-mythopoeic ones. It is vitally and exclusively concerned with the second kind, which means that for Zen the perception of the thing in the empirical world through cognitive-ontological images is a matter of primary importance. This, however, should not be taken to mean that the "perception" of the empirical world in

itself and as ordinarily understood is important. Quite the contrary; the perception of things as common sense understands it is disparaged downright by Zen as sheer illusion. "Perception" is considered authentic only when it is put directly and immediately in connection with the metaphysical Nothing as the ultimate ground of the phenomenal world.

Thus here again we are led back to the notorious Zen concept of "Nothingness" or Nothing. For according to Zen itself, the philosophical significance of the position it takes on the problem of the ontological-epistemic nature of images, can only be understood on the basis of a right understanding of what is really meant by the word "Nothing" in the technical terminology of Zen Buddhism.

Since, however, I have tried to elucidate the nature of Zen "Nothing" on several occasions in the past here at Eranos, I shall refrain from giving a detailed explanation of it again. I shall simply draw attention to the fact that the Nothing as conceived by Zen Buddhism has two fundamental aspects to be theoretically distinguished from each other, namely, an aspect relating to a state of consciousness and another relating to a metaphysical state of reality.

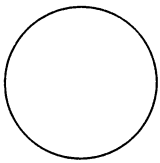
As regards the first of these two aspects of the Nothing, namely the "nothingness" of consciousness, it is to be remarked that the word "consciousness" in this context is to be understood in the sense of contemplative awareness, the mind in deep contemplation with all cognitive motions suspended and all psychic commotions tranquillized. The Nothing here actualized is a peculiar inner state in which the spiritual energy pervading the entire field of consciousness is held intensely concentrated, except that it is concentrated not upon any particular object in the "internal" or the "external" world, but upon its own self. The field of consciousness in its entirety, in other words, is focused upon itself with no focal point anywhere. The mind in such a state is naturally maintained motionless. But it is not just empty and void in the negative sense. For under the cover of immobility it is suffused with an atmosphere of the highest degree of inner tension, ready to move out in any direction at any moment.

Such, in brief, is the essential structure of the Nothing realized at the culminating point of Zen contemplation.

But the Nothing as understood in Zen has another aspect relating to an ontological state of things. And here the Nothing means the "nothingness" of Being, the ultimate metaphysical dimension of reality. In this aspect, it is realized as a peculiar region of ontological undetermination or non-articulation, in which reality remains in itself in its primordial metaphysical immobility before it begins to articulate itself out into variously determined and limited forms. As was the case with the "subjective" Nothing realized in contemplative awareness, the "objective" Nothing here in question is also absolutely empty on the surface, but inwardly it is an ontological plenum because of the enormous amount of creative, i.e., self-articulating, energy pent-up within itself. In this respect the Zen Nothing is essentially the same as the metaphysical Chaos of Chuang-tzŭ and the Nameless of Lao-tzŭ.

We must remark, however, that the distinction which has just been made between the two aspects of the Nothing, "subjective" and "objective," is merely a theoretical one. The truth of the matter from the Zen point of view is that the two kinds of Nothing here established for the purposes of theoretic analysis are in reality one and the same thing, constituting as they do one integral, seamless whole, which Zen simply calls the Mind or No-Mind. The Nothing or No-Mind is thus the primordial unity of the psychic and the metaphysical in their ultimate undifferentiation: The zero-point of consciousness from which all forms of "consciousness" come out, and at the same time, the zero-point of Being from which all forms of Being come out.

It is with reason that the Zen likes to visualize the psychic metaphysical Nothing thus understood in the form of a circle drawn with one stroke of the brush, a blank circle without even a single dot within.



The famous statement: "Limitlessly empty, there is nothing sacred," which is found in the Koan 1 of the "Blue Cliff Record" (*Pi Yen Lu*), is another, typically Zen-like expression for the same idea.

It will be evident that in this domain of contemplative-metaphysical nothingness there could be no image of a thing. The Nothing which is realized in this dimension of Reality, is imageless. It is the No-Image. But this No-Image which is outwardly an absolutely motionless state of psychic and metaphysical equilibrium, is inwardly of a remarkably dynamic nature. From time to time the equilibrium is lost and ontological vibrations are awakened in its depths. Then, the concentrated inner energy pervading the whole field of the No-Image bursts out in full force toward the domain of empirical experience. And whenever the No-Image is set in motion in this manner, it manifests itself in a powerful, vivacious image. The emergence of an image of this kind is in itself the ontological emergence of a thing. The thing emerges in the capacity of a self-manifestation of the No-Image momentarily transformed into an image. But the ordinary mind does not usually notice this particular qualification, and simply "perceives" there a physical thing, or in many cases only hears the word.

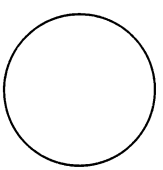
> Listen! Once a monk asked Chao Chou (J.: Jōshū, 778–897): "What is the significance of the First Patriarch of Zen coming from India?" (i.e., "What is the ultimate truth of Zen Buddhism?" or "What is the Nothing?")
> Chao Chou replied: "The cypress tree in the courtyard!" (*Wu Mên Kuan*, Koan No. 31).

The whole dialogue may become more understandable if represented in the following form.

> Question: "What is the Nothing in the authentic Zen understanding?"
> Answer: "The cypress tree in the garden."

In this particular context, the "cypress tree" is an image that has emerged out of the Mind of Master Chao Chou, i.e., his No-Image set in motion by the question of the monk. Those who read this Koan are supposed to seize on the spot the exact point at which the No-Image actualizes itself as an image momentarily, like a flash of lightening. From the viewpoint of Zen, however, the emergence of an image in such a form is, as I have said above, at the same time an ontological event. It is an ontological event in the sense that the image flashing forth from the No-Image is the same as a phenomenal form of a thing being articulated out from the original Unarticulated. The metaphysical Nothing comes out of the state of non-articulation and makes its appearance in the empirical dimension of Being as such-and-such a thing, i.e., as something concrete and sensuously tangible.

A dot appears in the empty space of the circle, the circle of metaphysical "nothingness."



The dot in this situation is concentration-point of the entire ontological energy permeating the whole field of the Nothing. But the appearance of a dot in the circle is just an instantaneous event. The dot does not evolve temporally. No sooner has it appeared in the empirical world than it goes back again to the original state of nothingness. But the consecutive appearance of similar dots produces in the ordinary mind the impression of a physical object more or less permanently existing in its presence.

Such is, in the view of Zen Buddhism, the ontological structure of every thing in the phenomenal world. Every thing is at every

moment a unique image which has emerged out of the No-Image, a particular articulated form of the Unarticulated, and which is about to disappear again into the Nothing — the Cypress Tree standing out just for an instant from the infinitely vast circle of "nothingness."

THE NEXUS OF ONTOLOGICAL EVENTS: A BUDDHIST VIEW OF REALITY

ERANOS 49
(1980)

I

The somewhat clumsy expression appearing in the title of my paper, "the nexus of ontological events," could easily be rendered more natural and smooth-sounding if we translate it into non-philosophical language and use, in its place, an ordinary phrase such as "interconnection of all things in the world" and the like. I have, however, intentionally chosen the special expression as the main title of my talk today in order to indicate that it is going to be topically concerned with the philosophy of the Hua Yen school of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

As to the reason why I use the word "events" instead of "things" I would simply point out at this stage that nothing in the world, according to Hua Yen is strictly a "thing"; everything is in reality an "event." What is normally considered a "thing" by our common sense and talked about as such in ordinary parlance is, properly speaking, nothing but an ontological event or an ontological process consisting in a close succession of momentary points of existence. What is most striking about all this is that, according to the philosophers of this school, not only is the whole world of being a vast nexus of ontological events thus understood, but that every one of the single

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The theme of Eranos 49 (1980), that is, the 49th Eranos Conference Yearbook, which is the compilation of lectures given at the Eranos Conference in 1980, was "Grenzen und Begrenzung — Extremes and Borders — Les extrêmes et la limite."

"things" which we encounter in this world is itself a miniaturized nexus of ontological events. Nothing here is single or simple in the strict sense of the word; every thing, on the contrary, is an ontological event which, itself, is a complex of an infinite number of ontological events. For everything is ontologically related to everything else and everything contains within itself everything else. This ontological state of affairs is what Hua Yen designates by a characteristic technical term: *shih shih wu ai* (Chinese), meaning literally "thing-thing non-obstruction," i.e., a state in which nothing obstructs and hinders by its presence the presence of anything else, or more positively formulated, perfectly free interpenetration of all things, an ontological vision of all things mutually penetrating or permeating into one another with complete freedom, there being no material opacity or impenetrability in any one of the things. It goes without saying that the word *shih*, here translated "things," must in this context be taken in the sense of an ontological event as I have briefly explained above and as I shall explain in more theoretic details in the course of this lecture.

The Hua Yen philosophy of the interpenetration of all things is, as you will presently see, a very peculiar form of Oriental ontology, standing unique and matchless in the entire history of Buddhist thought. But the idea itself of the *shih shih wu ai* (thing-thing nonobstruction) is far from being without a parallel in the world of philosophy. Quite the contrary; it is, as a type, found in many different forms under different appellations in divergent philosophical traditions in both the East and West. The Taoist metaphysics of Chaos, which I have often taken up here at Eranos, affords a fine example of it. The monadology of Leibniz another. The mystical metaphysics of Plotinus the Neo-Platonist represents a typical case within the tradition of Greek philosophy.

It is quite a remarkable fact that in the *Enneades*, Plotinus, particularly in those cases in which he, coming out of the state of ecstatic *enthusiasmos*, tries to convey the beautiful visions of the things "up there," we find a number of passages which might induce the

Buddhists who are familiar with the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* or "Garland Sūtra," the scriptural basis of Hua Yen philosophy, to think that the Neo-Platonist philosopher must have been well acquainted with the major ideas of this school of Mahāyāna Buddhism. True, the visionary experiences which Plotinus discloses to us are all authentically his own. On the other hand, however, we know how keenly interested he was in the spirituality of India. Besides, the third century A.D., in which Plotinus was active in Alexandria happens to be the age in which in India the philosophical activity of Mahāyāna Buddhism was in the first phase of ascendancy. Indeed, so closely similar to each other the images and symbols actually used in the *Enneades* and the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* that there are some historians of Buddhism in Japan today who think it not improbable that Plotinus was influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism.

I, for my part, would not readily go to the length of taking such a daring position. Moreover, the problem in any case is of no primary concern to me as far as concerns the present paper. By way of an excellent introduction, however, into the Hua Yen philosophy of the interpenetration of all things, let me begin by quoting a passage from Plotinus, which seems to me to be particularly interesting and appropriate for my purpose.

Speaking of the metaphysical state of affairs as seen through the eyes of a mystic enraptured with the dazzling beauty of the world of the pure Intellect, i.e., the metaphysical dimension of reality which is revealed only to the transcendental consciousness to be realized at the highest point of the mystical transformation of the human mind, Plotinus says:

> There (ἐκεῖ, i.e., in that transcendental dimension of being)... all is transparent, nothing dark, nothing resistant; every being is lucid to every other, in breadth and depth. Light runs through light. And each of them contains all within itself, and at the same time sees all in every other, so that everywhere there is all, and all is all and each is all, and infinite indeed is this world of glorious Light. Each of them is great. The small is great. The sun, there, is all the stars, and every star, again, is all the stars

and sun. While each is distinguished from the rest by a predominant factor peculiar to itself (so that each is called by a different name) all are mirrored in every other. (*Enneades* V, 8, tr. S. McKenna, Pantheon Books, New York, p. 425, with minor modifications; the Greek original, *Plotini Opera* II, ed. P. Henry et H.-R. Schwyzer, Paris, p. 384.)

In the eyes of the Buddhists, this would literally be a vivid and most accurate description of the "interpenetration of all things" as they know it by personal experience or as they have learnt from the works of the Hua Yen masters. None of them would find in these words of Plotinus anything incongruous if he were told that they came out of the mouth of the Vairocana-Buddha, i.e., the Buddha of the all-illuminating Light, whose grand figure occupies the central position in the sacred space of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*. For the "interpenetration of all things" as Hua Yen Buddhism understands it is a reference to a metaphysical dimension of existential luminosity spreading out before the "purified" consciousness of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in contemplation, in which all things, having been divested of their material opacity, become transparent, nothing being resistant and obstructive to anything else, everything reflecting all other things, freely penetrating into all other things and allowing others to penetrate into itself, to be fused ultimately into an all-comprehensive unity of cosmic Light.

The present paper purports to elucidate this very vision of the interpenetration of all things as philosophically elaborated by the outstanding thinkers of the Hua Yen school of Buddhism in China. As some of you may well remember, here at Eranos I have in the past on several occasions talked about Hua Yen. The references, however, have been more or less sporadic and fragmentary. Never have I tried to make a systematic presentation of the major ontological ideas of Hua Yen thought as an organically structured, integral whole. This is precisely what I am going to undertake in what follows, taking as a guide Fa Ts'ang (643–712), the greatest Hua Yen philosopher of the T'ang period.

Of all the first-rate philosophers not only of the Hua Yen school but of Mahāyāna Buddhism in general, Fa Ts'ang stands out as a most curious figure if only for a very interesting tie he has with Iranian spirituality. Commonly known by the honorary title Master Hsien Shou (meaning literally the Head of Wisdom), the third Patriarch of the Hua Yen school in China, Fa Ts'ang, is unanimously recognized to be the thinker who brought Hua Yen philosophy to the ultimate limit of perfection. No one can study or talk about Hua Yen without heavily depending upon his writings. He in fact represents the philosophical spirit of Hua Yen Buddhism at the apogee of its development.

Fa Ts'ang was in all respects a genuine Chinese philosopher. He was born in China, grew up there as a Chinese, and studied and trained himself as a Chinese Buddhist monk in Ch'ang-an, the great city, the center of learning and culture in the T'ang dynasty. But in reality he was an Iranian, at least racially — a man of Sogdiana. There must have been something essentially Iranian running in the blood of this unusual man. His very choice of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, of all the numerous Sūtras of Mahāyāna Buddhism which were already available at that time in China, as the scriptural basis of his own metaphysics would seem to indicate that in his spiritual and philosophical formation he had been under the dictates of the overwhelming image of the divine Light so characteristic of the spirituality of ancient Iran.

For the Vairocana Buddha who is the Buddha of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* is the Buddha the All-Illuminator. The Sanskrit word *vairocana*, deriving from *vi-ruc* meaning "to shine forth," "to be radiant," is commonly used to mean the radiance of the sun. And in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* itself it symbolizes the *jñānāloka*, the "light of contemplative wisdom," which, issuing out of its absolute source, spreads out in all directions and pervades the whole expanse of the infinitely wide space of the world of being. It is, in other words, the symbolic image of the ubiquitous presence of the metaphysical Light saturating and intoxicating the entire space of existence with its creative

energy.

The fact that Fa Ts'ang deliberately chose a Sūtra with such a figure of Buddha at its center as the most basic text of Mahāyāna Buddhism cannot possibly be a mere accident. There must have been something in the spiritual make-up of his mind, driving him irresistibly toward the dazzlingly bright image of the Buddha of the all-illuminating Light, in whom it will not be too fanciful to recognize a reminiscence of Ormazd or Ahura Mazda, the brilliant Lord of Light of Zoroastrianism. All this is as yet but a conjecture. But it must not, on the other hand, be forgotten that as a historical fact Mahāyāna Buddhism developed at first in the northwestern part of India and then in Central Asia where Iranian culture was gloriously in the ascendant. Besides, it was precisely in this region of the Buddhist world that the group of scriptures now unified under the name of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* were originally composed.

And if to this we allow ourselves to add another piece of conjecture to which reference has been made earlier, namely, that one of the major currents of Mahāyāna Buddhism which had found its philosophical expression is the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, and which was going to be propagated in China, Korea, and Japan, may have exercised influence upon the mystical philosophy of Plotinus who, in his turn, profoundly influenced later the historical formation of Islamic and Jewish philosophies, both scholastic and mystical, we shall have an extremely colorful picture of an interpenetration or interfusion of spiritual-philosophical ideas coming from various quarters and converging into a universal pattern of metaphysics to branch off again into divergent forms of philosophy in the East and the West. And against the background of such a vision, comparative philosophy may begin to disclose some aspects of human thought that have hitherto remained unexplored.

But let us at this point get out of the realm of conjectures that are yet to be subjected to a rigorous philological examination before they can be presented as an established truth. Here I shall look for a more modest and solid ground and try to restrict myself to analyzing

as objectively as I can the ontological-metaphysical structure of the doctrine of the interpenetration of all things as conceived by Fa Ts'ang and other representative philosophers of the Hua Yen school of Buddhism.

II

Instead of entering directly into the main subject, however, I think I had better begin by saying a few words of explanation about Hua Yen and the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* which this school of Mahāyāna Buddhism regards as its scriptural basis and upon which it has built up the entire system of its philosophy. I shall also try to clarify very briefly the position Hua Yen philosophy occupies within the long history of Buddhist thought extending over India and China.

The word *hua-yen*, to begin with, is Chinese. It is a two-word composition, *hua-yen*, the former meaning "flowers" and the latter "ritual ornamentation." Originally it comes from the Sanskrit name itself of the basic Sūtra, *Avataṃsaka* of which it is a Chinese translation. For the word *avataṃsaka* in Sanskrit means a garland or wreath, a ring-shaped ornament made of variously colored flowers. In the "imaginal" context peculiar to this Sūtra, these flowers are made to function as symbols of the innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who all together emerge out of the *mūla-Buddha*, the primordial or metaphysical Buddha — not the Buddha as a historical person but the Buddha as the absolute, spiritual Reality — just like flowers bursting into bloom in spring. Their magnificent efflorescence fills up the world-space. Hence the name of this Sūtra, *avataṃsaka*, and its Chinese equivalent, *hua-yen*.

As I have said above, what we now know as the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* was originally a group of smaller scriptures more or less of the same spiritual vein, independently written at different times and in different places but later arranged into a single Sūtra. It is said to have taken its final form somewhere in Central Asia by 200 to 350 A.D., a little later than the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*, the famous "Lotus Sūtra."

The *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* was translated twice into Chinese; the first translation was made in 418–420 by Buddhabhadra, a Buddhist of Northern India, and the second in 695–699 by Śikṣānanda, a monk from Khotan in Central Asia. And it was on the basis of these translations that the Hua Yen school was formed in China. I would add that the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, in spite of its tremendous importance, did not produce any definite "school" in India. Only in China did it produce a school of thought, which brought out all the subtle ontological-metaphysical implications of this Sūtra and elaborated them into a brilliantly grandiose system of philosophy which we are now setting out to study in the following pages of this paper.

III

I know very well how dangerous it is to be tempted to generalize too much in trying to bring out the characteristics of an object we happen to be studying. We can, however, safely point out at least as one of the characteristic marks of Oriental philosophers in general their peculiar ability of viewing things with and without ontological boundaries. The same thing can, I think, be described in a slightly different way by saying that what makes many of the Oriental philosophers look characteristically "Oriental" is the fact that they are those who have learnt to see things in two different dimensions, i.e., sometimes as determined by their natural ontological boundaries, and sometimes as completely free from all determinations. As Lao-tzŭ says in the first chapter of his famous *Tao Tê Ching*:

> With the eye of absolute non-attachment, (the sage) would see the mysterious reality of Tao (wish absolutely no determination). With the eye of attachment, he would see the determined forms of Tao.

In the empirical world — the world of natural attachment, as Lao-tzŭ calls it — each of the things man perceives around him is closely confined within its own boundaries or ontological limits beyond which it can never go. This is nothing other than what is indicated

by the most fundamental principle of logical thinking, namely, the so-called law of identity and the law of contradiction: *A* is *A*, and *A* is not *B*. This in fact determines the basic constitution of the empirical world. Man ordinarily lives in such a world. Being enclosed in this kind of world, he can never go beyond it. He naturally recognizes all kinds of things there and feels love for some of them and hatred toward some. This state of affairs which is characteristic of the world as reflected in the eyes of the man of common sense, is what is meant by the word "attachment" or "desire" in the above-quoted passage from the *Tao Tê Ching*. The man of common sense, in other words, looks at every thing without ever divesting it of its proper ontological boundaries.

As is clearly indicated by the same passage, however, there is a different kind of man, the "sage," who is capable of viewing things in a totally different dimension of existence, completely divested of their natural boundaries and determinations. In Buddhism this would correspond to the position of the Buddha or Bodhisattva who is able to see things in the state of *śūnyatā* or metaphysical "emptiness," the word "emptiness" being understood in a special technical sense I am going to explain.

This, however, is not yet the end of the story. For not only is this kind of man able to see things away from their boundaries, he is further able to see, and does actually see, these things again in their empirical forms, putting as it were each of them back into its original, sensible, frame with all its ontological determinations. And by doing so, he is back again in the old empirical world. As will be obvious, however, the empirical world now, although it *is* outwardly the same empirical world, is in truth a totally different world, having undergone a drastic internal transformation as it has gone through the intermediary stage of *śūnyatā*. There is a profound and essential difference between the original empirical world as seen through the eyes of ordinary people and the empirical world once dead and now reborn before the eyes of the sage. For the latter is still permeated by the *śūnyatā* which is now positively functioning as physical *śūnyatā*

as distinguished from the metaphysical *śūnyatā* which it has gone through at the previous stage. The empirical world as it is reflected in the consciousness of a sage is the metaphysical *śūnyatā* phenomenalized, appearing in the form of physical things. And this is the starting-point of Hua Yen philosophy. Otherwise expressed, the Hua Yen doctrine of the interpenetration of all things is a product of theoretical reflection upon the structure of the empirical world conceived, and actually experienced, as *śūnyatā* phenomenalized. How does the empirical world look like philosophically or ontologically after it has been made to go through the state of metaphysical *śūnyatā?* That, in brief, is the main concern of Hua Yen philosophy.

IV

I shall now try to restate in terms of the history of Mahāyāna philosophy what I have just said about the particular angle from which the Hua Yen thinkers approach our empirical world. This I shall do in order that you might know the historical position occupied by the Hua Yen school within the entire domain of Mahāyāna Buddhism, without an understanding of which it will be difficult for you to understand the real significance of the Hua Yen ontology which I shall present in the second part of my talk. But of course I can give here only an extremely brief summary. The topic is too big for me to go into details.

From this point of view and with this purpose in mind I shall begin by drawing your attention to the fact that the whole movement of Mahāyāna Buddhism started with a massive negation — a thoroughgoing negation of the ontological reality of the empirical things and the empirical world itself. This negative attitude toward the empirical world has its basis in the realization of the very *śūnyatā* which has just been mentioned.

The *śūnyatā* as an ontological negation, however, must not be unconditionally identified with what is semantically evoked by words like "emptiness," "void," "vacuum," and "nothingness" that

are usually offered as its English equivalents. For *śūnyatā* does not simply mean non-existence. To say that something is *śūnya* is not the same as saying that it is empty, void, or vacant in a purely negative sense. The truth is, however, that this semantic confusion has constantly been made, particularly in the popular understanding of Buddhism.

In fact, Mahāyāna Buddhism has often been presented as a radical ontological nihilism asserting as it actually does that everything is *śūnya*, i.e., empty, void, non-existent, just nihil. And the negative impression is strengthened even by a casual reading of any of the Mahāyāna Sūtras which abound in pessimistic descriptions of the ephemerality and unreality of all things in this world. Take for example the following passage from the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* which runs:

> All things are coming into being and going to naught, with nothing remaining forever. They are like phantoms, clouds, and flashes of lightning. None of the things continues to exist. None of them stays even for a moment. Whatever exists is in reality non-existent; it is but a dream, a shimmer of heat in the air.

Passages like this — and similar examples are found almost at every step in the Sūtras — will quite understandably lead to a pessimistic view of life and existence. And historically it did produce a peculiar type of popular Buddhism characterized by a pathetic tone of nihilism.

All this, however, is based on a mistaken — or perhaps we had better say, superficial — interpretation of the negative terms used in scriptures, which in the last resort is reducible to a misinterpretation of the key-term *śūnya* or *śūnyatā* itself.

We must know, to begin with, that the word *śūnyatā* in the scriptural context of Mahāyāna Buddhism really means *niḥsvabhāva-śūnyatā*, i.e., the "emptiness" in the sense of the negation of self-subsistent, self-sufficient realities. The *śūnyatā-vāda* or doctrine of *śūnyatā* is not an assertion of the unreality or non-existence of the empirical things. For it does admit the existence of the empirical

world as a matter of experiential fact. It even holds that the empirical world is real, except that to this proposition it immediately adds another, saying that it is real only relatively and relationally, not absolutely. None of the things, to put it in another way, is real self-sufficiently and independently of others. The gist of the assertion is that nothing in this world is real except firstly as essentially related to the cognitive activity of the mind which posits it there in the form of an independent thing, and secondly as a unit of an infinitely complicated ontological system of mutual relations.

Thus everything, in the view of Mahāyāna Buddhism, is deprived of its ontological subsistence or self-sufficiency. The whole world of being is deprived of the *svabhāva*, the self-sufficient reality, of its own. This is what is primarily meant by the word *śūnyatā*. All things are "empty" (*śūnya*) in this particular sense. And, on its positive side, the *śūnyatā* understood in this sense is also the ultimate reality (*tathatā*) of all things. As the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* says:

> All these things — none of them in reality exists. Their real reality (*prakṛti*) consists in being-without-reality (*aprakṛti*). Its being-without-reality *is* its reality. For all things are possessed of one single property. And that single property of all things is having-no-property.

In this and all other *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*, the ontological reality of all things as here described is, positively, called the metaphysical *śuddhi* or *pariśuddhi*, "purity" or "absolute freedom from defilement." And enlightenment consists just in realizing this ultimate metaphysical purity of all things.

It will have been understood by now that the *śūnyatā*, whether conceived negatively as ontological "emptiness" or positively as metaphysical "purity," should not be confused with a simple negation of the existence of things. For, what is negated here is, as I have tried to show, exclusively the essential self-sufficiency of phenomenal existents as individual entities subsisting objectively out there in the socalled external world, quite independently of out consciousness

as well as of the closely knit network of all things.

Yet there is, on the other hand, no denying that the word *śūnya* or *śūnyatā* in relation to the sensible things as we perceive them around us has conspicuously negative implications verging on a total, unconditional negation of the existence of the phenomenal world. It is clear, further, that the word was first chosen as *the* central key-term of Mahāyāna Buddhism precisely because of its negative implications. As a matter of fact, in the earliest group of Mahāyāna Sūtras which are known under the general name of *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and which historically marked the very beginning of the grand movement of Mahāyāna Buddhism rising against the ontological realism of Hīnayāna Buddhism, we find the word *śūnyatā* constantly used in such a negative way that it is liable to be misconstrued as a pathetic expression of the existential emotion of nihilism. *Śūnyaṃ sarvam*, "all things are empty" — this sentence alone, which is often mentioned as the briefest imaginable epitome of the whole philosophy of *Prajñāpāramitā*, will tell us a lot in this respect. We have seen above how, as a historical fact, this conception of *śūnyatā* gave an incentive to the development of popular Buddhism.

It is also true that Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250), the greatest figure in the early phase of Mahāyāna Buddhism, who, philosophizing on the basis of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, literally determined the subsequent course of its historical development, put extraordinary emphasis on the negative aspect of the *śūnyatā*. He in fact is the one who went the thoroughgoing way of *śūnyatā* negativism, pushing it to the extreme limit of its logical possibility. He is said to have gone this way as a practical means (*upāya*) for curing the common people of their ontological "disease," i.e., their natural, uncritical belief in the reality of the phenomenal things existing each as an essentially self-subsistent entity as they naively perceive it in the empirical world. His real intention, however, was to disprove the ontological subsistence of individual things as really self-subsistent things, so that one might be led toward the realization of the universal interdependence of all things, an ontological fact of supreme importance for Buddhist

philosophy in general, designated by the key technical term *pratītya-samutpāda*, the "interdependent origination" of all things.

The ontological structure of the empirical world standing on the principle of the *pratītya-samutpāda* will form the main topic of the second part of my talk. Here I shall confine myself to what is strictly necessary for the understanding of the problem I am concerned with in the present context. *Pratītya-samutpāda* is a composite word. The first element, *pratītya* means literally "by going to (others)" or "by having recourse to (others)," while the second, *samutpāda*, "arising" or "emergence." The word thus composed expresses the view which is typical of Mahāyāna Buddhism that the things in the world of being arise all together in mutual dependence of one upon another forming at every moment an infinitely vast network of ontological relations. Every single thing "goes to all others" in arising. But, obviously, whatever cannot arise, i.e., cannot come into being, except by "going to others" must necessarily be devoid of essential self-subsistence. Every thing in this sense must be *svabhāva*-less. For its "going to others" here simply means having no essential being of its own. It has to "go to others" precisely because it has no essential reality of its own. But, be it remarked, all the other things to which it "goes," are not possessed of essential reality either.

It is to be observed at the same time that if every thing can arise or come into being only in this manner, being essentially related to, and dependent upon, all other things, it can subsist as such only for an instant, for the network of ontological relations of which it is a knot does not remain the same for two successive instants. Even the slightest change occurring even to an atom within the network cannot but affect immediately the whole structure of the network, and if the network changes, everything changes accordingly. Thus the network changes in its internal configuration from moment to moment, and every thing in it goes on changing — goes on renewing, we should perhaps say — its existence accordingly. This is, in the view of Nāgārjuna, the ultimate truth about the ontological status of all things. And this is the *śūnyatā* as he understands it. It is clear that

the *śūnyatā*, "emptiness," of all things and their *pratītya-samutpāda*, "interdependent arising" are here completely synonymous with each other. As Nāgārjuna himself says:

> *Apratītya-samutpanno dharmaḥ kaś cin na vidyate.*
> *Yasmāt tasmād aśūnyo hi dharmaḥ kaś cin na vidyate.*
> "Not even a single thing there is that has arisen independently of the law of interdependence.
> Not even a single thing, therefore, there is that is not *śūnya* (empty)."
> (*Madhyamaka-Kārikā*, XXIV, 19)

As I said at the very outset, the meaning usually attached to the word "thing" must in such an ontological situation necessarily undergo a drastic inner change. For, as we have just seen, all things are here found to be deprived of their natural, essentially fixed, ontological boundaries. But if a thing thus loses its essential fixity, and therefore its ontological self-sufficiency as an independent entity, it ceases to be what is usually considered a "thing." Nothing is, nothing cannot be a "thing" here, paradoxical though this may sound. What common sense calls a "thing" is in truth but an ontological "event" as one of the innumerable momentary happenings which together constitute the cosmic process of the network of all ontological relations changing its configuration from moment to moment.

How, then, are we to account for the existence of concrete things as our experiential fact? The so-called external things are actually there, before us and around us. We constantly encounter them, perceive them, and get into touch with them.

The answer given by Nāgārjuna to this question is, briefly stated, as follows. We see all these things in the external world as solidly constituted substances, each fixed by its peculiar *svabhāva*, because our ordinary consciousness is by nature so made that it functions only under the delusive influence of language. By "language" I do not mean in the present context the language of communication and self-expression or the communicative-expressive function of language. What is meant is rather the language of cognition or the cognitive function of language. Language in this aspect is to be

represented as a deposit of the semantic images or meanings of all the words we have learnt to use from childhood, which, having its proper place in the psychic depth of what the Yogācāra school of Buddhism calls the *ālaya-vijñāna*, i.e., the Storehouse Consciousness, works out incessantly from that depth and determines the directions of the cognitive activity of our conscious mind. Its main function consists in dividing up the originally undivided whole of metaphysical reality into various ontological compartments more or less in accordance with the semantic configurations of the words deposited in the Storehouse Consciousness. As a result we cognize in the so-called external world the so-called things. Under ordinary conditions we are conscious of those things but remain unconscious of the working of the linguistic Storehouse Consciousness (or the linguistic Unconscious) which has brought them into being. So we tend to imagine that they are objectively there in the external world, quite independently of our mind and of each other. Having posited in the external world these things as independent entities through the unconscious working of language, we become firmly convinced of their objective existence. This is precisely what Buddhism regards as the inveterate disease of the human mind, "attachment," or more exactly the *arthābhiniveśa*, the "attachment to the external things."

In reference to this particular aspect of the linguistic Unconscious, Nāgārjuna uses quite significantly the word *prapañca* which may be translated "semantic diversification." *Prapañca* in ordinary Sanskrit means manifoldness, diversity, something appearing in various forms, and as a technical term in Nāgārjuna's philosophy it indicates primarily the articulation of reality into diverse entities in conformity with the meanings of words. It is, according to him, the very source of our ontological delusion, i.e., our perverted cognition of variously articulated things in the external world.

> Through the cessation of wilful acts and appetites one attains to the state of enlightenment.
> All wilful acts and appetites arise from articulating cognition (*vikalpa*).
> All articulations are due to *prapañca*.

> The *prapañca* is nullified only by (the realization) of *śūnyatā*.
> (*Madh.* XVIII, 5)

It is interesting that Nāgārjuna here identifies the metaphysical "emptiness" or *śūnyatā* of all things with the pre-linguistic state of reality, i.e., reality before it is semantically diversified into different independent entities. A little further ahead in the same chapter of the same book, he asserts with explicit emphasis that "being non-articulated, non-differentiated — that precisely is what characterizes the ultimate reality (*nirvikalpam, anānārtham, etat tattvasya lakṣaṇam*)."

Thus we see that the concept of *śūnyatā*, which is the central axis of the whole structure of Nāgārjunian philosophy, is itself surrounded as it were by a sort of semantic ambiguity or ambivalence. For, as we have observed earlier, Nāgārjuna, on the one hand, identifies in the most straightforward way the *śūnyatā* with the "interdependent origination" (*pratītya-samutpāda*) as the primal and ultimate ontological status of all things — taking of course the word "thing" in the above-explained sense, namely, that of an ontological process or event. Here the fundamental idea — or vision, we had better say — is that of a universal flow of intricately interdependent units of existence in the form of an ever-changing network of ontological relations. On the other hand, however, he, as we have just seen, characterizes the very same *śūnyatā* as the ultimate reality which is absolutely non-articulated and non-differentiated, which is, in short, "nothing" or "nothingness." How are these two apparently opposite aspects of *śūnyatā* to be unified? It would seem that Nāgārjuna himself left this problem unsolved; at least he did not solve it in a perfectly satisfactory manner. Hence the tremendous problem of how to interpret *śūnyatā*, which has developed in various directions and divergent forms through the long history of Mahāyāna philosophy in India, Tibet, China, Korea and Japan. In a certain sense we might say that the Hua Yen doctrine of the interpenetration of all things represents one of those forms — a particular form in which this school of Buddhism in China has proposed to solve the moot problem of *śūnyatā* as it was first put forward by Nāgārjuna in India. How,

then, did the Hua Yen philosophers solve it in concrete terms? That will be the topic of the second half of my talk.

V

Thus, the Hua Yen school came to inherit from Nāgārjuna the complex idea of *śūnyatā* as a decisively important ontological problem, which he had raised but to which he had given no final solution.

Nāgārjuna is unanimously called the "father of Mahāyāna philosophy." In truth, he stands out in the earliest phase of the historical development of the post-Abhidharmic Buddhism as the greatest figure, from whose intransigent logic of negation the philosophy of Mahāyāna Buddhism as a whole took its start. All the divergent schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism, whether in India, China, or Japan, historically go back to him, at least indirectly if not directly. The Hua Yen school is no exception.

Now the Nāgārjunian problem of *śūnyatā* which the Hua Yen philosophers found themselves faced with was philosophically centered on the right interpretation to be given to the word *śūnyatā* itself. I have already pointed out the semantic ambivalence of the word as we find it used by Nāgārjuna. Metaphysical non-diversification, i.e., the absolute oneness of Reality, on the one side, and on the other, the endless interrelation of empirical things. How can these two states be harmonized into the unity of the noetic experience of *śūnyatā*?

One of the possible — and perhaps most natural — solutions will be to recognize in the *śūnyatā* two different dimensions, pre-phenomenal and phenomenal, in which *śūnyatā* is to be experienced simultaneously, without any internal discrepancy between them, the pre-phenomenal being in itself phenomenal, and the phenomenal being in itself pre-phenomenal. As we shall see presently, this is basically the way Hua Yen took in its interpretation of the Nāgārjunian idea of *śūnyatā*. Looking at the matter from the other end, we might as well describe it in chronological order by saying that the

philosophy of *śūnyatā* inaugurated by Nāgārjuna produced in one of the particular directions of its historical development in China the doctrine of the interpenetration of all things, which came to be known as Hua Yen ontology.

The *śūnyatā* philosophy of Nāgārjuna, as it developed in this direction, came, while still in India, under the influence of another current of thought known as the *Tathāgata-garbha-vāda*, the doctrine of the "Womb of *Tathāgata*." This current of thought, although it did not succeed in forming an independent school for reasons unknown to us, seems to have been in reality an extremely vigorous one. And by coming into direct contact with it, Nāgārjunian philosophy got greatly modified particularly with regard to the understanding of the word *śūnyatā* in its metaphysical aspect, namely, *śūnyatā* in the sense of absolute non-articulation or non-differentiation. And thus modified semantically, the *śūnyatā* was brought into the world of Chinese Buddhism under the guise of a Chinese word, *K'ung*, meaning "void" or "empty."

The semantic modification here in question of the word *śūnyatā* occurred roughly in the following manner. Originally the word meant "non-articulation" in a predominantly negative sense, meaning as it did the total negation or effacement of all phenomenal (i.e., empirical) forms. Influenced by the idea of *Tathāgata-garbha*, this negative keynote of "non-articulation" turned positive. The "non-articulation" came to acquire the positive meaning of ontological plenum, i.e., the all-comprehensive metaphysical reality which, though in itself totally non-articulated and homogeneous, is ready to articulate itself out into an infinite number of ontological forms.

What is the *Tathāgata-garbha* which has brought about such a subtle but radical transformation in the semantic structure of *śūnyatā*? I do not have time, nor is this a right place, to give a full exposition of the *Tathāgata-garbha* doctrine. But at least a few words seem to be necessary on the concept itself of *Tathāgata-garbha*.

The underlying idea, we may begin by observing, is a very paradoxical one, namely, that the *śūnyatā* "emptiness" is in reality

a-śūnyatā "non-emptiness," or *śūnya* is *a-śūnya*. More exactly stated, *śūnyatā* bears in its primal structure a positive aspect which turns it into *a-śūnyatā*. In that particular aspect, *śūnyatā* is to be imaged as a metaphysical storehouse of all ontological potentialities, the ultimate plenitude of being, somewhat like Ibn 'Arabī's *kanz makhfī*, the "hidden treasure," by which the Ṣūfī philosopher refers to the metaphysical status of Divine Consciousness which, although in itself it is absolutely one and undifferentiated, contains within it the ontological potential to unfold itself into an infinity of determined forms. It reminds us also of the cosmic "bellows" of which Lao-tzŭ says in the *Tao Tê Ching*: "it is empty but inexhaustible; the more it moves the more comes out." Limitlessly and interminably phenomenal things emerge out of the unfathomable "void" of the *śūnyatā* as so many self-determinations of it, as if it were, to borrow the typically Lao-tzean terminology, the "ancestor of the ten thousand things." The *Tathāgata-garbha* is nothing other than the *śūnyatā* seen in this positive, ever-creative, *a-śūnya*-aspect. And, be it remarked in addition, the phenomenal-ontological form in which the *a-śūnyatā* of the *śūnyatā* manifests itself is precisely the aforementioned *pratītya-samutpāda*, the "interdependent origination" of all things.

The word *Tathāgata-garbha* itself is in this respect highly suggestive. Its first component, *Tathāgata* means literally "thus (*tathā*) come (*āgata*)" or "thus gone (*gata*)," it is one of the appellations of the Buddha, which we encounter everywhere in the Sūtras. As a technical term of Mahāyāna philosophy it indicates the Buddha, not as a historical person, but rather as a metaphysical reality of spiritual energy working as the metaphysical ground of all things, the ultimate source from which issue forth all things in the world of being, although in itself it is beyond all differentiations and determinations that are observable in the realm of empirical cognition. In other words, it is not so much the Buddha himself but the Buddha-Reality (*buddha-dhātu*), the spiritual-metaphysical reality of the Buddha, comparable in this regard with the Islamic concept of *ḥaqīqah Muḥammadīyah* "Muḥammad-Reality" or the innermost reality of

Muḥammad, indicating in a similar way the universal, cosmic, and metaphysical reality of all things which is attributed to Muḥammad in that it found its most remarkable embodiment in Muḥammad, the Prophet of Islam, but which is not Muḥammad the Prophet himself as a historical person.

As for the second component, *garbha*, it means "womb" and by extension anything containing anything else, a container. It can also mean the thing contained in a container, and in case the container happens to be the womb, it means the embryo or fetus. Thus the compound, *Tathāgata-garbha* means the "womb of *Tathāgata*" or the "*Tathāgata* as concealed within the womb," the more philosophical meaning of which is naturally the pre-phenomenal Buddha-Reality in a state of phenomenal possibility. And the basic contention of the philosophers who talk about the *Tathāgata-garbha* is that in every thing in the phenomenal world there is contained the Buddha-Reality. *Sarvasattvās tathāgatagarbhāḥ*, "All existents contain within themselves the Buddha-Realty," as the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra* says.

The primary reference of this proposition is a religious one. It simply means that all men without exception are endowed with the inborn possibility to attain enlightenment and become Buddhas. Its philosophical implication is, however, evident, particularly when it is directed against the aforementioned Nāgārjunian thesis: *śūnyaṃ sarvam*, "All things are empty" understood in a purely negative sense. "No," it says, "it is not true that all things are empty. Quite the contrary. Every thing in this world is *Tathāgata-garbha*; every thing is pregnant with an ontological reality." And if every thing is thus endowed with an ontological reality, that is because all things in the empirical world are after all phenomenal forms of the pre-phenomenal, metaphysical Reality, the Buddha-Reality. Every individual thing in this world is an ontological "event," if not a "thing" in the ordinary sense of the word, for everything at every moment is a direct "arising" or emergence of the Buddha-Reality. The Buddha-Reality in this status is phenomenally "defiled" and "covered," and cannot be recognized in its natural and essential purity

(*prakṛti-pariśuddhi*). "Just as"— so says the *Aṅgulimāla-sūtra* — "the moon and the sun, when covered by clouds, cannot manifest their light on the earth, but when the clouds are dispersed, their luminous nature is fully manifest, ... so is also the illumination of the sun and moon of the Buddha-Reality." And the moment we agree to this way of thinking, we are already stepping into the proper domain of Hua Yen philosophy.

As an evidence in support of what has just been said I would quote here a passage written by Tsung Mi (780–841), the fifth Patriarch of the Hua Yen school on the theoretical necessity of admitting the metaphysical, non-phenomenal Reality positively underlying the phenomenal world. It will be interesting to remark that Tsung Mi presents his view in this passage under the guise of an intransigent criticism of the San Lun school (the "school based on the three primary texts" of the *śūnyatā-vāda*). The San Lun school is the representative of the school of Nāgārjuna in China, characterized by an extremely negative, nihilistic interpretation of the concept of *śūnyatā*. The passage reads as follows:

> Here is our criticism of the position taken by the San Lun school which negates the ontological reality of all things. If, as this school claims, both the subject (i.e., cognitive consciousness) and the object (i.e., the things cognized in the external world) were absolutely non-existent, who is the one who knows this very nothingness? If everything were absolutely false and groundless like a dream, then whence do all these dreamlike phantoms emerge? All these things that are observably existent in our world may well be false forms. But even a false form cannot possibly appear if it were not for something really existent. (In the famous metaphor of water and wave,) the false forms of the waves can arise only because there is water really existent. Similarly (in the oft-mentioned metaphor of mirror and image) how can false images appear in the mirror, if there were no mirror? The Sun Lun school is certainly right in talking about the unreality of dreams and dream-objects, but it forgets that dreams can appear only when the sleeping person is really existent. If everything were *śūnya*, where do all the phenomenal things come from? Thus we come to know that the teaching of the San Lun school aims at only eliminating from the human mind its natural attachment to

> the phenomenal things believed to be really existent in themselves.
>
> (*Yüan Jên Lun*)

Here we find Nāgārjunian *śūnyatā* completely transformed into the metaphysical ground of all that exists in the world, the absolute Reality which through its interminable self-articulation brings into being all things, and which therefore necessarily permeates, runs through, and inheres in, the phenomenal world. To this observation, however, I must immediately add another important one, namely, that the *śūnyatā*, even in such a positive understanding, is not to be represented as some "thing," an independent entity, no matter how elevated and transcendent it may be like the Biblical God. If such were the case, Hua Yen philosophy would definitely fall outside of the boundaries of Buddhism. For Buddhism as a whole stands consistently, decidedly against any kind of reification. It does not admit the real existence of a "thing" in the ordinary sense of the word, be it phenomenal or pre-phenomenal, empirical or metaphysical. Rather, the *śūnyatā* or Buddha-Reality in this context must be represented as a dynamic spiritual energy, eternally *in actu* and always active, "arising" everywhere in limitlessly variegated phenomenal forms.

With these preliminaries, we are now in a position to proceed to an exposition of Hua Yen ontology.

VI

The most salient feature of Hua Yen philosophy is the major emphasis it places upon the phenomenal world. It is, otherwise expressed, predominantly if not exclusively interested in elucidating the ontological status and structure of the concrete things with which we are in direct contact in our everyday empirical existence. This is in fact what is referred to when one speaks, as one often does, of Hua Yen realism. But this of course should not be taken to mean that the empirical or physical things as Hua Yen deals with them are just the empirical things as they appear to our ordinary consciousness. What Hua Yen is interested in is the depth-structure of the empirical things

to be disclosed only to the depth-consciousness as it is realized in the state of *samādhi*. For in the view of the Hua Yen philosophers, the empirical things as they appear to our surface-consciousness in our ordinary cognitive experience are just their false images and forms; they are far from representing their ontological reality, whereas the ontological structure of those things which Hua Yen tries to clarify is their *real* structure essentially concealed from the sight of our ordinary consciousness. It is in this sense that the "Hua Yen Sūtra" (which is no other than the above-mentioned *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* in Chinese translation) and consequently Hua Yen philosophy are said to consist in a description of the very content of the Buddha's enlightenment experience.

How, then, do the empirical things look like in their depth-structure? This is the main problem we are going to deal with in what follows.

As I said at the very outset, Hua Yen philosophy was brought to the highest point of theoretical elaboration by an outstanding Irano-Chinese philosopher, Fa Ts'ang (643–712), a man from Sogdiana. I have also pointed out that Hua Yen philosophy is characterized by its concern with the ontological status of the empirical world and the nature of the individual things which constitute the empirical world, not as they appear to our empirical consciousness but as they manifest themselves to the contemplative awareness of the enlightened men, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. For the purpose of elucidating the structure of the ontological system of Fa Ts'ang, which he elaborated from such a point of view, I shall start by following the simple but very accurate way of approach which was proposed by the fourth Patriarch of same school, Ch'êng Kuan (738–839) who succeeded Fa Ts'ang in the lineage of Hua Yen philosophy. Ch'êng Kuan's system is very famous as the doctrine of the Four Domains of Reality. This phrase, be it remarked, should not be taken for an assertion that Reality is divisible into four different ontological regions, or that, more simply, there are four different worlds to be distinguished from one

another. What is really meant is rather that there are four different ways of viewing one and the same world, and that each of these four different views produces subjectively an image of the empirical world in exact correspondence to a particular "depth" of consciousness. With this understanding, let me give here a brief explanation of these four "domains" as presented by Ch'êng Kuan.

(1) The first is the Domain of the sensible things (Chinese: *shih*). This represents the ordinary world-view of the ordinary people whose depth-consciousness has not been opened up, who, therefore, cannot have a glimpse into the depth-structure of the things. The surface-consciousness which alone is functioning here cognizes only a world of empirical or phenomenal multiplicity, in which all ontological units are clearly and definitely distinguished from one another and stand opposed to one another, each maintaining to the last its individuality and particularity.

As long as we remain in this dimension of being and consciousness, we have no chance of witnessing the interpenetration of things. Instead of interpenetrating, the things obstruct each other. Ontological obstruction is, indeed, that which fundamentally characterizes the empirical world. In order that the things might interfuse and interpenetrate, they must first of all be transparent. But the empirical things as they show themselves in this dimension are all solid and opaque in the sense that each of them is rigidly guarded by its own essential boundaries against others flowing into it. Such is roughly the structure of the "domain of the *shih*."

(2) The second of the aforementioned four Domains is that of the absolute metaphysical Reality (Chinese: *li*). Being the all-pervading, all-comprising oneness of metaphysical non-articulation, it is the pre-phenomenal ground of reality out of which arise all phenomenal things. Its being non-articulated implies at the same time that there is in it absolutely nothing. That is to say, it is the ultimate non-phenomenal dimension of reality, in which all phenomenal things,

losing their essential distinctions, are reduced to oneness or nothingness. It will be obvious that the *li* as a major principle of Hua Yen ontology is no other than the *śūnyatā* in its two fundamental aspects, negative and positive, all-nullifying and all-creating, as I have explained above. In its negative aspect, the *li* is responsible for the fact that the so-called empirical things are "self-less," "substance-less," or "essence-less," that, in short, all things are ultimately nothing. But an observation of its positive aspect (in which it is identical with the Buddha-Reality) makes us realize that all these self-less or substance-less things are so many articulated forms of non-articulated Reality, and as such have a right claim to being regarded as real. And this positive aspect of the *li*, when considered independently as an ontological principle, leads us directly to the realization of what Ch'êng Kuan classifies as the third Domain in the system of Hua Yen ontology.

(3) The third Domain is that of the free, unobstructed interpenetration of *li* and *shih*. As I have just said, the *śūnyatā qua* Buddha-Reality is at this stage realized as a universal and boundless expanse of cosmic energy which, though in itself absolutely homogeneous and undifferentiated, goes on creating the whole world of being in such a way that the empirical things emerge out of it all as its determined forms. The emergence of the phenomenal world being such, all the individual things that come to establish themselves there as seemingly independent and different entities (different, i.e., ontologically distinct from one another) are homogeneously permeated by the same *li*. In other words, all the different things in the empirical world are one and the same in that each of them (i.e., every *shih*) embodies the one absolute Reality (i.e., the *li*) totally and perfectly.

The empirical world of ours is undeniably a world of incessant change and limitless differentiation. Indeed, nothing repeats itself. Spatially there are no "two same things" in this world. Temporally, nothing remains the same even for a moment. In this sense the world is new at every moment. Everything at every moment is a unique

ontological "event." Yet, on the other hand, all these different and ever-changing things are but different and ever-changing articulation-forms of one and the same *li*. The cognitive act of actually witnessing the one single *li* permeating all the different forms that are observable as "things" in the world of phenomenal multiplicity is the very basis on which stands the Hua Yen doctrine of the interpenetration of *li* and *shih*.

(4) The fourth and the last of the four Domains is that of the interpenetration of *shih* and *shih*. The interpenetration of *shih* and *shih* means the mutual ontological penetration of everything into everything else in the empirical dimension of experience. Factually, the philosopher now is back again at exactly the same place from which he took his start, the first Domain, the world of *shih*, the empirical world, except that his transformed consciousness sees them also totally transformed. Before, in the first Domain, all these things were dark, opaque, and mutually obstructive. Now their material opacity is gone; luminosity and transparency take its place. And in the universal expanse of the cosmic light, the things begin to be interfused freely and unimpededly with one another, so that the whole world of being appears as an intricate web of lights mutually penetrating into one another.

The interpenetration of *shih* and *shih* represents the highest point reached by Hua Yen philosophy characterizing it in the most original and profound way. The whole structure of Hua Yen ontology was built up by Fa Ts'ang on the basis of this idea. Now that we have understood the general make-up of this ontological system with its two cornerstones, *shih* and *li*, we are, I think, in a position to proceed to the last part of this paper, which will be devoted to a more theoretical analysis of the thesis of the interpenetration of all things according to a masterly exposition given by Fa Ts'ang himself.

VII

The idea of the interpenetration of all things as conceived by Fa Ts'ang may conveniently be presented as an ontological system consisting of the following three basic assertions about the nature of the things in the empirical world.

(1) Each of the empirical things existing — so it seems — in the external world, is in itself and by itself non-existent, *śūnya*, or "empty." It deserves to be considered existent only in the capacity of a converging point of the complicated interrelationships that hold among all the things in the phenomenal dimension of reality. More simply expressed, nothing in this world exists independently of others. Everything depends for its phenomenal existence upon everything else. All things are correlated with one another. All things mutually originate. Even the tiniest flower owes its existence to the originating forces of all other things in the universe. Beginning with the direct influence exercised by its immediately neighboring things such as the earth, air, sunshine, rain, insects, birds, human beings, etc., the nexus of ontological relations extends to the ultimate limit of the universe. Indeed, the whole universe directly and indirectly contributes to the coming-into-being of a single flower which thus stands in the midst of a network of intricate relations among all things. A flower blooms in spring, and the whole universe arises in full bloom. The flower *is* the spring; it is the spring of all things.

Here we have an image of the universe as an essentially relative, or relational, world in which all things emerge and exist in mutual correlation and interdependence. As I have pointed out more than once in the course of this paper, what is in ordinary language called "thing" is not or can not, in such a situation, be a thing; rather, it is an ontological "event." Thus the universe in this vista is a tightly structured nexus of multifariously and manifoldly interrelated ontological events, so that even the slightest change in the tiniest part of it cannot but affect all the other parts. A mote of dust arises, and the whole

universe is by structural necessity moved thereby. And what is in the technical terminology of Hua Yen philosophy called *yüan ch'i* (J.: *engi*) corresponding to the before-mentioned Sanskrit word *pratītya-samutpāda*, is nothing but this dynamic, simultaneous and interdependent emergence and existence of all things.

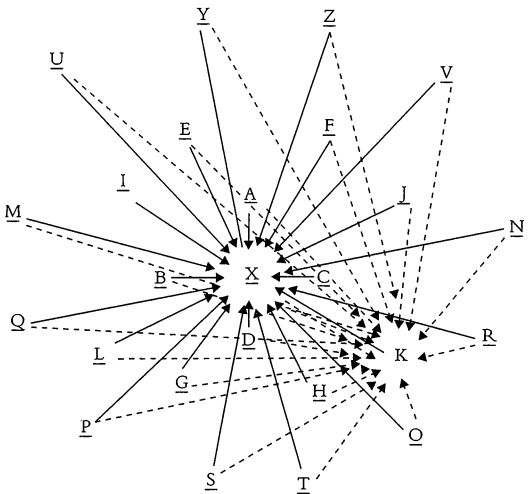
The most important point to note about all this is that the *yüan ch'i* should never be confused with or mistaken for a causal relation between things. For it does not purport to account for the coming-into-being of a thing, anything whatsoever, in terms of cause-effect relationship. The causal thinking is basically linear, no matter how meandering the line in effect may be. This type of thinking tries to account for the coming-into-being of a thing, say *X*, by tracing the chain of its causes (*E*, *D*, *C*, *B*) back to the first cause (*A*).

$$X \rightarrow E \rightarrow D \rightarrow C \rightarrow B \rightarrow A$$

The *yüan ch'i* (or *pratītya-samutpāda*) type of thinking, on the contrary, accounts for the existence of a thing, *X*, in terms of all the things (*A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, ...) which are related to it and which collaborate together in bringing the *X* into being and keep it in being. Some of these things stand very close to the *X*, some remote, and some others still farther away, until our view reaches the ultimate limit of the universe, so that all things in the universe are seen to be related to the *X* closely or remotely in all degrees of closeness and remoteness.

But the picture is still far from being complete for reproducing diagrammatically the exact ontological situation of the things from the Hua Yen point of view. For each of those things (*A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, ...) which, in this particular case, are viewed as playing the role of the formative factors of *X*, and which, thus, all center around and converge into the central point, *X*, is in its turn (*K* for instance) to be represented as another center around which turn all the rest, including *X* itself, as its own formative factors. Only a diagram of this nature, consisting of an infinite number of multitudinous and multidimensional systems of ontological relations would do justice to the

true structure of things as they are seen from the viewpoint of *yüan ch'i*. And only such a diagram would be accepted by the Hua Yen philosophers as a correct visualization of the central idea of their ontology, namely, that the universe in its entirety is an infinitely vast multilayer structure of manifoldly interrelated things.



(2) This first thesis of Hua Yen ontology is backed by the second which is more of a metaphysical nature and which makes the following assertion. Not only are all things thus interdependent and correlative in the act of giving rise to, and maintaining, the phenomenal world as a network of intricate ontological relations, but each one of the constitutive units of this network is an original configuration of the metaphysical *śūnyatā* or non-articulation, positively functioning as the Buddha-Reality or *li*, as I have explained earlier. And this phenomenal or empirical appearance of the one absolute Reality in the form of divergent things in the universe is technically called in Hua Yen philosophy *hsing ch'i* (J.: *shōki*), the "arising of the Buddha-Reality."

It is to be remarked that by upholding the doctrine of *hsing ch'i*, Hua Yen, at least in this particular respect, discloses that its philosophy

follows an archetypal pattern of thinking which is commonly shared by many schools of Oriental philosophy and which finds its representatives everywhere in the East in various forms. Vedānta is a wellknown example of it, the classical Taoism of Lao-tzŭ another, with its vision of the Nameless turning into an infinity of Names. Mention may also be made as a typical case the Islamic metaphysics of Ibn 'Arabī constructed on the basis of the notion of *tajallī*, the "self-manifestation" of the absolute Reality, its main idea being that the One "descends" from its original metaphysical state of absolute undetermination or non-articulation and goes on articulating itself into the world of the phenomenal Many. Examples are too abundant to be enumerated here.

It is important to notice that, in the case of Hua Yen, the *hsing ch'i* is most closely related to the aforementioned *yüan ch'i*. Or rather, the former directly develops into the latter. It is, in other words, because all things are but so many different phenomenal forms under which the one absolute Reality, the Buddha-Reality or *li* makes itself visible, that when any thing emerges anywhere and at any time, all things take their rise at the same time with that thing or, indeed, in that very thing. And nothing other than this is what is meant by the "interpenetration of *li* and *shih*." The "interpenetration of *shih* and *shih*" which marks the ontological climax of Hua Yen philosophy will be properly understandable only on the basis of the interpenetration of *li* and *shih*.

(3) Thus we come to the third major thesis of Hua Yen ontology, that all things interpenetrate each other. This conception was explained by Fa Ts'ang in a number of different ways, sometimes in an unsophisticated, popular style, sometimes elaborately philosophical.

At the lowest, i.e., the least sophisticated level of explanation, he clarified the metaphysical-ontological structure of reality using as a concrete, visible illustration a gold statue of a lion which stood in the Imperial Court in which he happened to occupy a place of high esteem. Being addressed to the common, philosophically uninitiated

people, the elucidation he gives through this example is extremely simple and easy to understand.

Here is a golden lion, he says. It is made entirely of pure gold. The different parts of the lion's body, like the ears, eyes, legs, head, etc., though different from one another as individual organs and bodily members, are all various determinations or configurations of one and same material, i.e., gold. In this latter aspect any part of the lion's body is identical with any other part. By the very fact that they are of gold, all the parts of the lion's body are "interfused" with one another. That it to say, according to Fa Ts'ang every single part contains within itself the rest of the body. Even in a single hair there is contained the whole body of the lion.

It goes without saying that in this illustration the gold symbolizes the *li* which, remaining eternally the same in itself, is nevertheless limitlessly flexible and pliable in appearing in different forms. The emergence of the various bodily members of the lion out of the gold symbolizes the *hsing ch'i*, the arising of the Buddha-Reality (i.e., the *li*) in the form of various individual things in the phenomenal world, while the fact that these disparate parts collaborate with each other in constituting the integral whole of the lion's body symbolizes the *yüan ch'i* (i.e., *pratītya-samutpāda*), the "interdependent origination" of all things.

Next comes the intermediary level of explanation between the purely popular and purely philosophical, adjusted to the degree of understanding of those who have studied philosophy but who cannot yet grasp the full import of a metaphysical idea except by the help of sensory imagery. For the purpose of visualizing the interpenetration of all things as they are reflected in the depth-consciousness of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Fa Ts'ang had recourse to an ingenious device. Around a burning candle he placed ten mirrors facing each other and all turning toward the candle, eight of them encircling it and one above and another below. Arranged in this manner, the light in the center was naturally reflected in every one of the ten mirrors.

The light reflected in each mirror was again reflected in every other mirror, and every mirror reflected all the lights that were reflected in all the mirrors including the light reflected in itself as it is reflected in all the rest. Thus the mutual reflection of lights, once started, came nowhere to a halt, so that there was actualized before the eyes of the onlookers layers of light that went on extending limitlessly in depth and width.

Such, Fa Ts'ang explained, is the metaphysical-ontological structure of the things, which he characterized as the unobstructed interpenetration of all things. The light of the burning candle in the middle is reflected in all the mirrors, each of which produces its own image of the central light — that is the *hsing ch'i*. The light reflected in each mirror looks in itself independent, one, and unique, but in its real constitution it is multiple and complex, for in it is contained, as it were all the lights that are reflected in all the mirrors — that is *yüan ch'i*. The One is All, and the All is One. The All is in All. In a single atom there is contained the whole universe in infinite layers. This is what Hua Yen calls the *Indrajāla*-structure of reality in reference to the mythic image of Indra's Net which is said to be composed of countless jewels reflecting each other and being reflected in each other.

On a more abstract and philosophically formalized level of thinking, Fa Ts'ang gave a somewhat different explanation of the matter. Suppose, he begins by saying, there are now in our presence three empirically and sensibly different things: *A*, *B*, *C*, say, a flower, a bird, and a stone. By the principles of *hsing ch'i* and *yüan ch'i* we know that these three things contain each within itself exactly the same ontological components (*a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, ...) because all these ontological components are in truth nothing but self-articulations of the one nonarticulated Reality, and because all of them arise together, interact, collaborate with one another, and positively participate in the origination of each of the *A*, *B*, and *C*.

A (a, b, c, d, e, ...)
B (a, b, c, d, e, ...)
C (a, b, c, d, e, ...)

How is it, then, that A is empirically A, neither B nor C — or more concretely — a flower is a flower, definitely distinguishable from a bird or a stone? To this question Fa Ts'ang answers in terms of the ontological "powerfulness" and "powerlessness" of the components. In the case of A, the flower, a particular component, a for example, of all the constituent elements which the flower shares in common with the bird and stone, happens to be "powerful," i.e., positive, self-assertive, and dominant, compelling all the rest to be "powerless," i.e., negative, recessive, and hidden under the surface.

Likewise with B. The B (bird) asserts itself as a bird because, from among the infinite number of component factors which it shares with A (flower) and C (stone), a particular element, b for example (which remains "powerless" in the flower and stone) happens to be "powerful" and dominant, reducing all other elements to a state of "powerlessness." And exactly the same is true of the C (stone).

Thus A, B and C (the flower, bird, and stone, respectively) are just three different forms actually assumed by the absolute Reality (*hsing*) in arising (*chi'i*) out of the state of non-articulation into the state of articulation in the world of our empirical experience. The phenomenal difference observable among A, B and C is due in each case to a different configuration of the same ontological factors (a, b, c, d, e, ...). The ontological factors themselves are always and in all cases the same, except that they appear in infinitely various arrangements and dispositions. That which plays a decisive role in differentiating one thing (flower, for example) from another (bird, for example) in the empirical world, is simply which of the commonly shared ontological elements is accidentally "powerful" and which "powerless." Those elements that happen to be "powerless" in a thing are not manifest, only the "powerful" and dominant elements being empirically actualized. Nevertheless they are there, all of them as part of the

depth-structure of the thing, supporting, as it were, from below the phenomenal subsistence of the thing as that very thing.

Thus, in the view of a Fa Ts'ang, reality in its metaphysical-ontological depth-structure is a continuum, vertically as well as horizontally. The individual things as discrete ontological units are nothing but appearances of that metaphysical continuum to our empirical consciousness. If these things appear to our eyes as individually separated from one another, each with its own substantiality, it is because the cognitive ability of our empirical consciousness is of such a nature that it is focused, in perceiving anything, only on its "powerful" element, all the rest lying hidden from the sight. This is why a thing *A* is perceived as something different from another thing, *B*. Seen with the eye of a Buddha or Bodhisattva, on the contrary, *A* is the same as *B*, there being no essential distinction between them, although as a matter of phenomenal reality, even for a Buddha or Bodhisattva, *A* is definitely *A*, and *B* is *B*. And this comes from the fact that the eye of "enlightenment" perceives in every thing not only its "powerful" element but all the "powerless" elements as well.

In fact a Buddha or Bodhisattva, according to Fa Ts'ang, is a man whose all-penetrating sight is able to bring to light all "powerless" elements of a thing out of the darkness of their "powerlessness," and comprehend them in one single view side by side with its "powerful" element. But when a thing is viewed in this way, with all its ontological constituents, "powerful" and "powerless," brought out to the open field of actuality, it is no longer that particular individual thing; it is the whole universe. For the whole universe is actualized in the thing. It is of supreme importance to notice that, from the standpoint of Hua Yen philosophy, any thing viewed in such a state is not only a thing *viewed by* a Buddha, but it is itself a Buddha. A flower viewed in a state in which all its ontological constituents have turned "powerful," is no longer a flower. It is the universe. It is the Buddha. It is in this sense that all things are said to be potentially the Buddha, and that all things — not only the Yogi himself who happens to be in

contemplation, but all things in the whole world — are said to be eternally in a state of deep *samādhi*. And this is the final statement which the idea of the interpenetration of all things leads up to.

CELESTIAL JOURNEY: MYTHOPOESIS AND METAPHYSICS

ERANOS 51
(1982)

I

"The Play of Gods and Men" which happens to be the general theme of the Eranos meeting this year, seems to have reminded everybody of the concept of *homo ludens* put forward several years ago by Huizinga who has elaborated a peculiar theory of human culture from the viewpoint of this concept. Having established play and playfulness as a fundamental cultural category, he has succeeded in indicating the forceful presence of the elements of playfulness at the basis of many, or almost all important aspects of human culture throughout history and all over the world.

In fact, man seems to have an inborn tendency to play and playfulness. It is as though man could not subsist as man without playing. In every domain of his existence man does play. It is a curiously characteristic fact that he often brings elements of playfulness even into the seriousness of religion and religious faith.

As an illustration of this fact, I at first thought of taking up as the subject of my talk the problem of Zen dialogue. For Zen, of all the schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism, is notoriously characterized by its natural propensity for playfulness, a propensity widely known as "Zen

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The theme of Eranos 51 (1982), that is, the 51st Eranos Conference Yearbook, which is the compilation of lectures given at the Eranos Conference in 1982, was "Das Spiel der Götter und der Menschen — The Play of Gods and Men — Le jeu des hommes et des dieux."

laughter" or "Zen humor." Indeed, those who approach Zen Buddhism in expectation of something deadly serious are liable to be dismayed at a strange mixture of seriousness and hilarious buoyancy they find in the words and acts of Zen people. Zen masters, one would say, like to play. This is particularly the case with *great* masters. Moreover the playfulness which is so characteristic of Zen has created for itself a peculiar form of expression called *mondō*, Zen dialogue. *Mondō*, meaning literally a question-and-answer, is essentially nothing but a spiritual game. It will be interesting to observe that Zen masters, in spite of their seriousness, or rather precisely because of their extreme seriousness, tend to express their inner experience in the outward form of a playful exchange of words or verbal game. The verbal game is typically a spontaneous dramatization of what is actually taking place in the invisible depths of a tension-filled spiritual situation actualized between the two interlocutors. By thus dramatically exposing their inner experiences exposed in the common field of *mondō*, the two "actors" play together, plumbing at the same time the spiritual state of each other.

I have started to talk about the play element in Zen Buddhism, however, not in order to pursue the problem of the Zen dialogue into further details. My intention has rather been to bring to light, by contrast, the peculiarity of the playfulness involved in what I have chosen as the main topic of today's talk, namely, the Celestial Journey. I wanted to draw your attention to the fact that even within the limited domain of religion and religious matters, there are recognizable a number of entirely different kinds of play. The playfulness shown by Zen masters as they are engaged in *mondō* is, as a matter of fact, conspicuously different in nature from the kind of playfulness observable in the "celestial journey."

Let us begin by noting that the "celestial journey," as a spiritual experience, is a typically shamanistic phenomenon. Certainly, as a cultural theme, it makes its appearance in widely divergent forms of literature, religion, and philosophy, such as folk tales, myths, epic

poetry, mysticism and even metaphysics, some of them being at a high level of artistic or intellectual refinement having apparently nothing at all to do with such crudely "primitive"customs as are usually associated with the meaning of the word "shamanism." But, as a primordial psychic experience, the "celestial journey," in whatever form it may appear, is something having its root deep in the soil of shamanism. It *is* a product of what we may call shamanistic mentality, a typical form of self-expression for the peculiar playfulness of the shamanistic psyche.

As I have suggested above, there is a remarkable difference between the playfulness of a Zen master boisterously enjoying his spiritual freedom in *mondōs* and that of a professional shaman ecstatically enjoying an inner freedom in his "celestial journey." The locus of play, to begin with, is totally different. The place in which Zen masters play is the empirical world, the concrete, physical and sensible world of ordinary existence, in which our daily life is carried out. Shamans, in contrast, can play only in the world of imagination. Turning their backs to the world of daily life, and "transcending" it, they soar up into the world of mythopoeic images. Only there, in the ethereal height of a *mundus imaginalis*, are the shamans in a position to enjoy the "celestial journey." The shaman, in other words, is in need of a "sacred" space carefully prepared beforehand for his spiritual play if he intends at all to play, whereas the Zen master, in order that he might play, has no need of a specially consecrated place, completely secluded from the mundane world. All that is required of the man of Zen is a total transformation of his consciousness, the mind being transformed into the No-Mind. Seen with the spiritually illumined eye of the No-Mind, the empirical world itself, with its familiar Nature, things and people, turns on the spot into a limitlessly vast space in which the man of Zen can play to his heart's content. The ordinary world is his playground. As the famous Zen adage goes: "The ordinary way, that *is* the Way."

All this is, partly at least, due to the fact — and this makes another significant point of difference between Zen and shamanism — that

the kind of play here in question is, in the case of Zen, purely and strictly human. A Zen dialogue is a serious *and* playful exchange of words between man and man. It is essentially a human play, involving absolutely no non-human element, be it god or spirit. There is no place for a participation of any extraterritorial beings in this play.

In shamanism, on the contrary, there is always involved a personal relationship — again, serious and playful at the same time — between man and spirit. A shamanistic game can never be played by human beings alone. God or spirits must also participate in it. It is a game commonly played by men and spirits, a real co-operation of the human and the divine.

It will be clear that the place in which such an unusual game can properly be played cannot be our physical world which for divine beings is too crudely concrete, i.e., too profane. Gods and spirits being essentially of an "imaginal" nature, they are able to play only in an "imaginal," hallowed space to be realized in the psychic depths of man. But it is not for an ordinary man to create at will such a place. Only a professionally trained shaman endowed with an enormous amount of psychic energy is in a position to do that. A professional shaman is an extraordinary man who possesses a special capacity to conjure up out of the depths of his psyche an "imaginal" space into which the shaman himself goes in, now completely transfigured into a mythopoeic person, and into which gods and spirits are invited to come to join him in the enactment of his visionary drama.

A shamanistic play is, in this sense, through and through a psychic event. It is utterly unthinkable apart from the structural peculiarity of the psychic depths of man. It is fundamentally a play of primordial images which, evoked directly out of the inmost recesses of the subconscious, come up into the region of the daylight consciousness, completely or partially reified in the capacity of autonomous, "imaginal" configurations of the psyche. The "celestial journey" which is the main topic of the present paper belongs in the category of psychic events such as I have just briefly explained.

In order to describe in more concrete terms the inner structure of the psychic event, the "celestial journey" in its close relations with shamanism, I shall here analyze by way of illustration, a remarkable shamanistic work in ancient China, *Ch'u Tz'ŭ*, generally known in English as the *Elegies of Ch'u*. It is a collection of poems, long and short, originating from the State of Ch'u, impregnated with the "imaginal" spirit of shamanism. Compiled in the Han dynasty, it has remained alive to this day in Chinese literature as a precious record of the shamanistic images and ideas that were prevalent in ancient China in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C.

The state of Ch'u was a huge country in South China around the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, extending over wide regions of swamps, rivers, dark forests and the mysterious lake Tung-t'ing, the largest lake in China, a country notorious for its shamanistic traditions and customs. The basic mechanism of society in the State of Ch'u was entirely under the domination of shamanistic spirit, ranging from the Court life and the political institutions of State policy down to the forms of the daily life of the common people.

The *Elegies of Ch'u* consists of works by some of the representative poets of this State, all of a conspicuously shamanistic mentality, the main figure among them being Ch'ü Yüan, a famous shaman-poet who lived from about 343 to 283 B.C., and the rest being either his immediate disciples or his later followers.

Not only is this collection of Ch'u poetry valuable as a historical document of shamanism in ancient China; it is also of supreme importance in that more generally it presents to our critical view some of the universal and ever-recurring patterns of shamanism at the highest stage of poetic elaboration. Besides, of particular interest for the specific purposes of the present paper is the fact that among the works collected in this anthology there are two remarkably long poems having both exactly the same theme: the "celestial journey." Quite significantly, one of them is entitled *Yüan Yu* "Wandering into Far-off Countries," meaning obviously nothing other than a "celestial journey." Though attributed by some to Ch'ü Yüan himself, this

poem is now generally believed to be a work by an anonymous follower or imitator of Ch'ü Yüan in the Han dynasty. The most remarkable characteristic of this poem which decisively distinguishes it from the real works of Ch'ü Yüan is its undeniable Taoist coloring. As we shall see later, the poem towards the end merges into a pure metaphysics of Taoism, marking thus an important transition stage from shamanistic to metaphysical spirituality.

The other one of the two poems is uncontestedly an authentic work of Ch'ü Yüan. Although it carries a title seemingly remote from "celestial journey," *Li Sao*, meaning most probably "an encounter with my own sorrows," its theme *is* a mythopoeic journey of a shaman's soul to a strange world of primordial images. Comprising as many as 375 verses, the long shamanistic epic depicts the extraordinary things and events experienced by the disembodied soul of Ch'ü Yüan in the course of its "celestial journey." *Li Sao*, by the way, is considered a masterpiece of Chinese literature.

Reading through the *Elegies of Ch'u* in its entirety as a valuable corpus of shamanistic literature, we recognize there two different forms of shamanism clearly and definitely distinguished from one another, which may further be theoretically elaborated into two basic types of shamanism of universal applicability even beyond the confines of Chinese culture. For convenience of reference, let us call them type A and type B respectively. The type A is characterized by a shaman calling down a spirit to himself, getting into a state of mantic excitation, so that in that state he might enjoy for a while playing with the spirit he has invoked. The type B, on the contrary, is the case in which the shaman enacts his own play independently. No need of invoking any god or spirit. Here the shaman himself is a mythopoeic hero, half-deified, who enjoys his own "imaginal" experiences in an extraterritorial world far away from the petty cares and anxieties of the common people in the commonplace world. The mythopoeic play culminates in a "celestial journey."

That which characterizes the shamanism of the "Elegies of Ch'u,"

however, distinguishing it from most of the similar phenomena from other parts of the world is the fact that it shows vital interest in the "ordinary," i.e., non-shamanistic aspect of the shaman. It is, in other words, concerned with the shaman not only in the capacity of a shaman as a subject of extraordinary "imaginal" experiences, but in the capacity of an ordinary person as he lives in the empirical world, in the dimension of day-to-day existence. And this is tantamount to saying that, in the view of the poets of the "Elegies of Ch'u," there is a split observable in the personality of a shaman. There are two different persons living side by side in a single person: a shaman, on the one hand, anxious to live eternally in the "other" world beyond the limits of empirical time and empirical space, and an ordinary man, on the other, forced to exist against his will and wish in confinement within the boundaries of the physical world, in close relation, both personal and social, with thousands of other ordinary men and ordinary things. The shaman is keenly conscious of the contrast within his own person between himself *qua* shaman and himself *qua* ordinary man.

It is this sharply felt inner split, existential and psychic, that turns the shaman into a tragic figure as we see him described in the "Elegies of Ch'u." He may be happy in his mantic elevation. He may forget about the worldly sorrows and pains as long as he remains in such a state. But the state of elevation is always of short duration. Soon, only too soon, he is pushed back into the sordid reality of the daily life. There he is again just an ordinary man.

This existential contradiction which he feels in his own person, the constant fluctuation between excitation and enervation, and the sharp contrast he recognizes between the fascinating beauty of the "imaginal world" on the one hand and the unbearable baseness of the world of material reality on the other — all these factors cannot but make him aware of himself as a man of essential ambiguity, a man whose inner life is torn asunder because it has two centers, in short, a man with two egos sharply opposed to each other. Shamanism itself, at least in the form in which it is presented in the "Elegies of

Ch'u," cannot but be a tragic drama of a man whose psychic structure is such that he has to live alternately in two different worlds, "imaginal" and physical, there being no harmony between them.

As we shall see presently, the tragic nature of Ch'u shamanism is observable in both its types, A and B. But it is in the type B that it comes out more clearly and is subjectively experienced by the shaman himself more keenly, as an intolerable existential pain. The shaman-poet Ch'ü Yüan, the highest representative of the type B, is, in particular, a personal embodiment of the tragic destiny of a shaman.

In the dimension of ordinary, day-to-day existence, Ch'ü Yüan was a man of moral purity. He occupied once a high official position in the kingdom of Ch'u and lived among the splendors of the royal Court. But, precisely because of his uncompromising moral uprightness and his devotion and loyalty to the king, he soon became a victim of bitter hatred and slander on the part of the Court people, and ended up by being banished to an uncivilized border district of the State. Even while living an outwardly brilliant life in the capital, however, he used to feel himself an outsider, completely alienated from the mundane order of things. Knowing well the existence of the "other" world beyond the horizon of this world, the "imaginal" world of dazzling beauty and spiritual purity, he was the more unhappy in the empirical world of moral turbidity.

The whole world is muddy and turbid,
I alone am pure and serene.
All other men are drunk,
I alone remain sober.
Wherefore am I thus banished from their society.

Fain would I throw myself
Into the swirling waters of the river Hsiang.
Fain would I find my grave in the belly of a fish.
How could I bear the dust of the mundane world,
Covering up the immaculate, white body of mine.

(From *Yü Fu* "The Fisherman," attributed to Ch'ü Yüan)

Such is the human landscape he observes around himself. There is no consolation anywhere in this world. As the poet Sung Yü, his disciple (290?–222? B.C.) sings on behalf of Ch'ü Yüan.

> How sad is the autumn wind rustling in the trees,
> With leaves falling down, faded and withered.
> . . . . . .
> In the rising tide of sorrow I here remain sobbing,
> As the growing chill soaks into my body.
> . . . . . .
> I grieve that I was not born in a better time,
> That I have fallen upon this maddening age.
> . . . . . .
> Many are the causes of my sorrow and pain.
> I look up at the bright autumn moon with a heavy sigh.
> Walking around beneath the stars till the day dawns.
>
> (From *Chiu Pien* "The Nine Arguments")

It is to be remarked that this is a world permeated by an atmosphere of an existential, psychic tension leaving absolutely no room for play or playfulness. The whole situation is tragic through and through. The only way left for the shaman to escape from the excruciating pain of an alienated existence is to leave at a stroke the empirical world and go into an entirely different dimension of existence which is no other than the "imaginal" world, his own world in which all those physical and material things he is accustomed to see around him in the empirical world appear before his eyes, suddenly transfigured, assuming mythopoeic forms and behaving mythopoeically. Into this "other" world of mythopoesis, therefore, Ch'ü Yüan decides to go. Thus he sets off on a "celestial journey" which is the only form of play he can enjoy.

Instead, however, of going on directly to analyze the nature of this "journey," let me spend some time in observing what happens in the other type of shamanism. As I have said before, there are in the "Elegies of Ch'u" two different types of shamanism, A and B, and correspondingly there are two different "imaginal" worlds, which must theoretically be distinguished from one another. Ch'ü Yüan is an

outstanding master only of the type B, whereas of the type A, which I am now going to discuss, he is but a sympathetic observer. What takes place in this type of shamanism, he observes from outside, and gives it a fascinating poetic expression, but does not himself participate in it. It does not belong to his own personal experience.

The type A of Ch'u shamanism is represented in the "Elegies of Ch'u" by a group of short poems gathered together under the title of *Chiu Ko* "The Nine Songs." Originally popular songs at an extremely low level of shamanistic spirituality, these nine pieces are said to have been found by Ch'ü Yüan in vogue among the common people of the State of Ch'u, tarnished by an entanglement of primitive beliefs and obscenities. It was, according to an authoritative tradition of Chinese philology, Ch'ü Yüan who, replacing the crude words and images of the original pieces by refined ones, elaborated them into genuine poems of artistic perfection. And in this refined form, they have come down to us as Ch'ü Yüan's own works entitled the "Nine Songs."

Now it is characteristic of this type of shamanism that the shaman, going through a rigorously determined ritual procedure, tries to call down his god from heaven. If he succeeds, the god invoked descends upon the shaman and possesses him, transforming him psychosomatically. The shaman now is a different person. He is literally "besides himself." And to his totally transformed consciousness, the objective world appears also totally transformed. In a state of shamanistic inebriation, he sees all things in their mythopoeic forms. The empirical world here discloses its primordial, "imaginal" reality, and reveals itself as a *mundus imaginalis*.

The *mundus imaginalis* in our present context is essentially a psychic creation of a consciousness in shamanistic excitation; it is the world of Being seen through an "imaginal" veil projected by the psychic energies of the shaman's mind. But for the shaman, it has definitely an ontological value; it is an objectively real world, far more real than what ordinary people regard as the real, objective world. It is really real because it is "sacred" in contradistinction from

the "profane" world, which to his eyes appears now devoid of reality.

The shamanistic *mundus imaginalis* is for the shaman himself as well as for all those who participate more or less in his experience a "sacred" place magically evoked out in the midst of the "profane" world. It is a consecrated space into which the shaman himself enters and in which he is allowed to enjoy playing with the god he has called down. But in order that he might do so, the "sacred" space must first of all be evoked out, for the god will be willing to come down from his eternal abode to enjoy temporarily a joint play with the shaman only on condition that there be such a particular place fully prepared for that purpose. What is commonly known as "shamanistic séance" is nothing other than a magico-ritual means specifically designed for an effective evocation of an "imaginal" reality of this nature. Let us turn now to the "Nine Songs" to see, through some concrete examples, what actually happens in "shamanistic séances."

In the first of the "Nine Songs," entitled "The Eastern Emperor, the Great One" (*Tung Huang T'ai I*), a male shaman describes a "shamanistic séance" in which he plays the principal role. The "Great One," originally the name of an Eastern star, was worshipped as a god of the highest rank in the religious system of the State of Ch'u.

> The day is auspicious, the horoscope good.
> In profound reverence we start this ceremony to please
> the Emperor on high.
> As I grasp my long sword by its hilt adorned with jade.
> Tinkling, tinkling, do my girdle-gems sound.
> Keeping down a mat on the floor with weights of jade.
> Holding a nosegay of aromatic plants
> Offering meats with orchid leaves strewn underneath
> I here present the cinnamon-wine and peppered drink.
> Drums are beaten with sticks raised
> In slow and gentle rhythm the chanters sing
> Flutes and strings loudly play in concert.
> In divine possession the shamaness dances beautifully attired
> The hall is filled with the fragrance of flowers

The five notes of music resound in thick profusion
And the god, pleased, happily reposes.

In the particular "séance" here described everything obviously goes well. All participants, the god and men, are happy and pleased. A kind of unearthly joyfulness reigns over the scene. This, however, is not always the case. More often, or almost as a rule, this kind of shamanistic play, particularly towards the end, sinks into a dark mood. The Ch'u shamanism of the type A is generally rather of a gloomy nature. And it is this dark aspect of the "Nine Songs" that is especially relevant to the topic I want to discuss in this part of the present paper.

In order to elucidate the tragic nature of the play-element involved in shamanism of the type A, I must begin by drawing attention to the fact that in the "shamanistic séances" as poetically depicted by Ch'ü Yüan in the "Nine Songs," a male spirit or god is usually invoked by a female shaman or shamaness, while a female spirit or goddess is invoked as a rule by a male shaman. The invocation of the god or goddess, which is at the same time a magical evocation of a "sacred" space, is to be carried out with ceremonious or ritual exactitude, with all preparations, spiritual as well as physical, duly made with meticulous care. Otherwise, the god or goddess will not be induced to descend from heaven upon the shaman to "possess" him or her.

As we have already seen by a concrete example, the invocation ceremony itself is part of — or the beginning phase of — the shamanistic game. In performing the ritually required acts stage by stage, the shaman goes on playing. He thereby organizes a sacred play. Those who accompany him and help him in the ceremony play with him. Even the outsiders who are allowed to take part in the ceremony in the capacity of the audience also play with the players on the stage. And of course, the god invoked also does play with the shaman.

In one of those invocation ceremonies described in the "Nine Songs," to give an example, a female shaman who wants to call down a male god, begins by putting herself in a state of spotless ritual

purity. She purifies her body with water perfumed with aromatic plants, puts on a gorgeously colored garment, and, in the fragrance of burning incense, with sweet-smelling flowers in her hand, dances a graceful dance to the accompaniment of songs, drums and flutes.

Here is a passage from the poem entitled "The Lord of the Clouds" (*Yün Chung Chün*), narrating an encounter of a shamaness with her god, the Lord of the Clouds. She begins to sing:

> I have taken an orchid-bath.
> My hair I have washed with perfumed water.
> Many-colored garments I wear.
> Sweet-scented and beautiful, like a flower am I.

It will be remarked that the shamaness here describes her own self as not only ritualistically purified; with pride she also points out her being enticingly pretty — as pretty, she says, as the aromatic flower she holds in her hand. In such a state she awaits the coming down of her "lord." Her intention is quite clear. She wants to tempt him down from heaven so that she might play with him a play of love, an amorous rendezvous. The personal relation which the shamaness is trying to realize between herself and the deity is, as Arthur Waley has observed, "a kind of love affair."

And in effect, the god, in response to her invocation, makes his appearance and comes down from the sky in long, winding and sinuous curves. He thereby reveals himself in his true image which is evidently an "imaginal" form of a huge serpent. The Lord of the Clouds turns out to be a heavenly Serpent or Dragon.

> Winding and sinuous, the god descends from heaven.
> Descending, he alights on my body.
> Glittering and glistening, he illumines the world.
> In an unending blaze of his eternal light.

Thus in the "sacred" space brilliantly illumined by the personal presence of the god, the shamaness gives herself up to the supreme pleasure of being "possessed" by him — a shamanistic, mythopoeic union, a kind of temporary sacred marriage, which is the consummation of

the "love affair" between god and man, or to borrow a peculiar expression from Arthur Waley, "a sort of mantic honeymoon."

Unfortunately, however, the pleasure does not last long. The union is invariably a brief, transient experience. The amorous relationship of the shaman with the god is inevitably of a tragic nature, at least from the viewpoint of the shaman. So is also the experience of our shamaness as she herself describes it in the present poem.

> Brilliant and shining, the god
> Comes down to me to stay awhile.
> Too soon, he soars up all of a sudden,
> Disappearing amidst the clouds, far far away.
> Yearning after the Lord who has left,
> I heave again and again a deep sigh.
> Distressed and depressed is my heart,
> Sad and afflicted I here remain.

It is noteworthy that what we observe in the event described in this poem represents the most basic pattern of the shamanistic experience of the type A in the "Elegies of Ch'u." Almost always, the god proves fickle and either disappoints the shaman by "not fulfilling the promise," or does come down upon the shaman, but, letting him taste a brief pleasure of union goes away suddenly, leaving the shaman in unbearable agonies of love.

The god proves fickle and leaves his lover too soon — this is how the shaman himself describes the situation. In terms of a theory of shamanistic consciousness we might describe the same thing differently by saying that the subjective "deification" of the shamanistic ego is of extremely short duration. While in the state of union, the shaman finds himself totally deified. His deified ego puts him in a position to enjoy an amorous play with his divine lover. The tragedy consists in that he cannot remain long in the state of deification, but that he cannot go back immediately to his empirical consciousness either. Shamanistically expressed, he is not longer fully "possessed," except that he is not yet fully "secularized." He is, in other words, in a state of subjective ambivalence, fluctuating, as it were, between

deification and secularization. Thus his ego, remaining half-deified in the afterglow of the temporary sacred marriage or divine "possession" still in shamanistic excitation, wanders about lovelorn and agonized waiting impatiently for the return of his beloved, that is to say, waiting for another chance of self-deification.

II

As we turn to the Ch'u shamanism of the type B, we encounter an "imaginal" world remarkably different from that realized in the type A. There are a number of important differences observable between the two types, but the most conspicuous and most decisive of all is the following. In the type A, as we have just seen, everything begins with a shaman invoking a god. Through a ritual procedure of invocation, the shaman tries to call down the god. If all things go well, the god, pleased or tempted, descends upon the shaman, "possesses" him, ecstatically transmutes him, and lets him taste a transient pleasure of union. This is roughly what we have gathered from the "Nine Songs."

In the type B, which we are now going to examine, on the contrary, there is no particular need of the shaman's performing an invocation ceremony, for shamanism here does not consist in the shaman's calling down a god to himself. No god is asked to come down. Instead, the shaman himself goes up. Instead of a god descending from above, the shaman in person ascends to heaven. And his personal account of what he experiences during his ascension to heaven, in case he does give an account of it, constitutes a mythopoeic epic of "celestial journey." This is how "celestial journey" comes to form a central theme — or perhaps we should say, *the* central theme — of this type of shamanism. I have said earlier that there are in the "Elegies of Ch'u" two important works dealing with this very theme in a highly elaborated poetic form: *Li Sao*, "an encounter with my own sorrows," by Ch'ü Yüan, and *Yüan Yu*, "wandering into far-off countries," by a Han dynasty poet.

It will be remembered that, in the type A, the shamanistic ego, as the subject of "imaginal" experiences, is fully and perfectly shamanized or "deified" only during the time of the mystic union while he is divinely "possessed," but that it otherwise remains in an uncertain, unstable state, half-deified, hovering between the divine and the human. Even under such existentially ambiguous conditions, his consciousness remains usually inebriated, still in a state of "imaginal" excitation. But the shaman is keenly and painfully aware of his ego being distinctly separated from the divine ego of his god. Shamanism in this case must necessarily assume the form of a drama enacted conjointly by two different persons, two different egos, one divine and the other human, fluctuating between mutual unification and separation.

The situation is completely different with the shaman of the type B. He does not need, to begin with, being "deified" through being "possessed" by a god or spirit he has called down. For he is, quite independently of any external force, able to bring his internal state into a state of mythopoeic excitation. By concentrating his own psychic energy in a peculiar way, he can at will and at any time "deify" himself, i.e., shamanize his consciousness. And once in that dimension of being, he is the master of his own world, a world of fantastic imagery which his psyche goes on creating and projecting around itself. Primordial images that normally remain confined in the obscurity of the deep strata of his mind, are evoked and go on emerging out of the subconscious confinement one after another on to the surface level of consciousness. And these "imaginal" configurations of the psyche are subjectively experienced by the shaman as so many mythopoeic entities existing in a far-off country beyond the world of physical reality.

It is to be observed that the shaman in such a state is no longer a man as we ordinarily understand the word. Otherwise expressed, the real subject of the extraordinary experiences in the "imaginal" world thus realized is not the shaman himself as a concrete, integral person. Rather, it is an internal part of him, the central axis of his psychic

mechanism — the "soul" as it has traditionally been called. The important point about this, however, is that the "soul" must be understood in this context in the sense of the vital principle of human existence in its psychic purity, i.e., as completely liberated from all physical connections with the body.

As a matter of fact, in talking about shamanism and other similar phenomena, religious or spiritual, one often mentions the word "ecstasy." "Ecstasy," from the Greek word *ékstasis* meaning literally "rising out of (something)," means in a shamanistic context the peculiar experience of the shaman "going out of himself," which, stated in more concrete terms, is a reference to the shaman's "imaginal" realization of his soul being disjoined from his own body to which it is closely united as long as he remains in the empirical order of things. The upshot of all this is that the subject of shamanistic experiences, the hero of the shamanistic drama, is not the shaman as a personal unity of soul and body, the internal and the external, so much as his internal half, i.e., the soul detached from its corporeal tenement and divested of all material adjuncts.

I am of course saying this in particular reference to the shamanism of the type B which, as I said in the First Part, reaches its culmination in the experience of "celestial journey." From the point of view of shamanism itself, not only of the Ch'u shamanism as we find it in the "Elegies of Ch'u" but of shamanism in general, this kind of "imaginal" experience cannot properly be accounted for except on the presupposition of the existence in man of a psycho-spiritual entity called "soul" and its essential separability from the physical apparatus to which it is temporarily attached in this world. This being the case, I shall here give a brief exposition of the shamanistic theory of the soul in a particular form in which it underlies the conception of the "celestial journey" in ancient China.

According to a belief commonly held by the ancient Chinese, every individual human being is a composite of two separate entities, the body and the soul, but the soul itself is a temporary unity of two separate entities. That is to say, a soul consists in reality of two souls,

hun and *p'o*, sometimes translated in English as the higher or spiritual soul and the lower or bodily soul respectively.

Hun, originally representing the principle of life-breath, is, in terms of the well-known Yin-Yang theory, of a Yang nature. And as such it is in charge of the "higher," i.e., spiritual functions of man. *P'o*, on the contrary, is originally associated with the image of blood, belongs in the category of Yin, and is charged with the "lower," i.e., material and animal functions of the body.

Hun and *p'o* thus being essentially opposite to each other, the bond of union between them is an extremely unstable and tenuous one. As long as man lives, the two remain conjoined to one another in his body. But at the moment of death they forsake the body, and at the same time forsake each other, the *hun* going back to its real abode, the heaven, and *p'o* to the earth, there to decay together with the body.

It is, however, important to note from the point of view of shamanism that *hun* and *p'o* are of such a nature that even before physical death they can and do leave the body, not permanently to be sure, but temporarily. And this is precisely what makes the shamanistic "ecstasy" possible, although the same temporary absence of the soul from the body often happens with non-shamans, as, for example, when one loses consciousness or when one experiences various things in a dream while asleep. But with ordinary people, it is mostly the *hun*-soul that, disjoining itself from its companion, *p'o*, flies out of the body. This seems to be often the case with shamans too. However, a well-trained authentic shaman is one who has mastered the special technique of sending his soul at will out of his body without harming the internal unity of *hun* and *p'o*, i.e., without disjoining them from one another.

In a poem entitled the "Grand Summoning of the Soul" (*Ta Chao*) in the "Elegies of Ch'u," for example, we see a professional shaman trying to call the vagrant soul of another shaman back into the latter's body. The actual word used is *hun-p'o*. The summoner addresses himself to the integral whole of *hun* and *p'o*. Thus:

O *hun-p'o*, come back.
Thou shouldst not go roaming too far.

In either case, however, whether *hun-p'o* or *hun* alone, and even with experienced shamans, the temporary departure of the soul from the body naturally tends to put both the soul itself and the body in a seriously dangerous situation. Certainly, the soul, liberated from the bodily ties, is, theoretically at least, in a position to act as a subject of "imaginal" experiences. This does not mean, however, that all disembodied souls are able to enjoy the supreme spiritual pleasures such as that of "celestial journey." Quite the contrary; in most cases the disembodied soul, even of a professional shaman, turns out to be not strong enough to set out on a "celestial journey." Instead, it is liable to be carried away into strange, dark places filled with all kinds of dangers and frightful beings. In a poem "The Summoning of the Soul" (*Chao Hun*) which is said to have been composed by a disciple of Ch'ü Yüan for the purpose of calling back the soul of his master, which has roamed out of the body, the summoner begins by saying:

O soul (*hun*), come back!
Having left thy proper abode (i.e., the body)
Why art thou roaming about in the four corners of the world?
Having deserted the places of thy delight
Why dost thou choose to meet things of evil omen?

And, in fact, the summoner goes on to give vivid description of the horrors the roaming soul is going to encounter in its wandering. His words evoke out a lurid and ghastly world of primordial images — an "imaginal" landscape projected out of the subconscious depths of the mind. It is "imaginally" presented as an extraterritorial world inhabited by monsters and strange beings never to be met with in the empirical world, such as men with tattooed faces and blackened teeth who offer human flesh to their gods and who make salty paste out of human bones; giants a thousand feet tall who search for wandering souls of men to devour them; men having nine heads each; a monster with a tortuous back and a sharp horn on his forehead, three-eyed

and with the head of a tiger and a bull-like body, who, raising his bloody thumb chases after men as a gale wind and finds in human flesh a sweet relish. There is a huge snake, nine-headed, moving about swiftly and nourishing its own heart by swallowing men. There are red ants as huge as elephants, and wasps as big as gourds.

It will be unnecessary to continue the description of this world in order to reproduce the dark, ghastly fascination the poem would exercise upon the sensitive mind of the reader. For our particular purpose, enough has already been given to show how perilous a state the soul finds itself in, once it has left the body. It usually wanders into an extremely dangerous sphere of being where horrors beyond imagination are awaiting it on the way.

This, however, is the case only with poorly gifted shamans and ordinary, untrained people. It must be remarked that among non-professionals, too, there are some who happen to be by nature prone to ecstatic experiences of the kind here in question. But in their case the repeated experience of the soul roaming out of the body almost always, or most frequently, ends up by leading to psychosis. The situation is totally different with well-experienced shamans of the highest caliber. For they know how to control with professional dexterity not only the souls of other men but also of their own.

A shaman of superior psychic caliber is, as Professor Eliade has said, a "great specialist of the human soul." He is of course the real master of his own soul. He can at will disjoin his soul from the body, and send it out into vast distances beyond the confines of the terrestrial world. And he can, by so doing, let his soul enjoy an "imaginal" wandering in a world of *mythopoesis* without going astray into its infernal region such as has been sketched above. The mythopoeic wandering of the shaman's soul in the far-off countries might then take on the form of a "celestial journey." Let us turn immediately to the *Li Sao* which, as I said earlier, is by common consent a masterpiece in this genre of Chinese Literature, a long poem by Ch'ü Yüan, the greatest shaman-poet of the "Elegies of Ch'u," narrating his own

experience of a "celestial journey."

The poem starts with Ch'ü Yüan describing himself as an ordinary man living in the empirical world. As I said at the outset, in the case of the Ch'u shamanism of the type B, there are always observable two persons living together in one individual person, forming two different strata of his ego-consciousness. Otherwise expressed, the ego of a shaman is realizable alternately in two different dimensions of consciousness. The relationship between the two dimensions of the ego-consciousness is extremely subtle, dynamic, and fluid. And because of his clear awareness of this double structure of his ego-consciousness, the shaman must exist always in a state of high inner tension.

In the beginning part of the poem, Ch'ü Yüan observes himself in a miserable situation as he lives in the profane world, surrounded on all sides by mean and base people at the Court in the vortex of political intrigues, personal envy, hatred and animosity. He alone is morally clean, righteous and upright. The world around him is wholly rotten and corrupt. He speaks of himself and the world in the first person. The first person here is nothing but a self-expression of his empirical ego as distinguished from his shamanistic-mythopoeic ego.

> All men, chasing one another, rush forward with greed for profit
> Their stomachs full, they do not feel satiated.
> Judging my mind by the standard of their own minds
> They intend to compete with me with envy and malice.
> Going after wealth and fame, they drive themselves into growing frenzy.
> .....
> I for my part drink every morning the dew falling from magnolia
> At evening I eat petals dropped from chrysanthemums.
> If my heart remains pure and spotless,
> It matters nothing to me if I have to faint with hunger.

So he declares with pride and self-confidence. But at the same time he cannot suppress the sentiment of deep sadness arising out of his heart. He *is* sad, infinitely sad and distressed. In utter dispair tears stream down his cheeks. He sings:

Many a heavy sigh I heaved in my despair,
Grieving that I was born in such an unlucky time.
I plucked soft lotus petals to wipe my welling tears
That fell down in rivers and wet my coat front.

(Translation by David Hawkes)

The empirical, non-shamanistic ego as described by the poet-shaman in these and many other similar verses is evidently aware of itself as a subject of terrible sufferings in the world of daily existence. It is highly important to remark that in the case of a shaman born with a extraordinary spiritual sensitivity and psychic excitability like Ch'ü Yüan, a strong emotional tension of the kind here depicted is enough to bring about a sudden transition of the ego-consciousness from the empirical dimension, in which it has to endure the miseries of life, to an entirely different dimension, the "imaginal," in which it realizes itself as transmuted into a "hero" of a mythopoeic epic. What has up to that moment been an "objective," physical order of things and events appears now in a completely different light. To his shamanized eyes the world appears transfigured into a real *mundus imaginalis*.

Thus the shaman — or more exactly, his shamanistic-mythopoeic ego — starts on a "celestial journey."

Having yoked four Hornless Dragons to my Phoenix-Carriage.
With a gust of wind, all of a sudden I soar up to the sky.
Starting in the morning from the Holy Mountain in the East,
I arrive in the evening at the Garden of Gods in the West.
There in these sacred precints I want to take a rest awhile,
But the Sun is moving on at a quick pace, the day is declining.
So I order the Solar Charioteer to slow down the speed,
Telling him not to move on to the Sunset Mountain
appearing in the distance.
For unendingly long and far is the journey I have now in mind.
Up and down I want to go, seeking after my real friends.
Thus watering my Dragon-horses at the Bathing Pool of the Sun,
And tying my reins to the eastern Cosmic Tree,
I break a twig of the western Sunset Tree with which
to strike back the Sun.
And there I enjoy roaming about for a little while.

The shaman-poet's journey goes on like this. The passage I have now translated being just its initial part. The poem of more than 300 verses is too long to be reproduced in full. Nor is it for my purpose necessary to do so. It is enough if I have conveyed some impression of what the shamanized soul of Ch'ü Yüan experienced in the mythopoeic world. Far more important from the viewpoint of the present paper is the fact that even in the midst of the mythopoeic journey wandering joyfully (so it seems) among fascinating images and going through a succession of exciting events, the shaman in reality is not always happy and contented. Rather, he is basically unhappy. For apart from a number of unpleasant situations with which he is confronted on the way, the empirical ego-consciousness protrudes itself from time to time quite unexpectedly into the proper field of his shamanistic ego to contaminate his pure enjoyment of the *mundus imaginalis*. As a result, the shaman's ego is kept in a state of constant oscillation between its two dimensions, the mythopoeic and the empirical. And the exhausting struggle of the two inner dimensions with each other continues all through the "celestial journey," until finally the empirical ego gains the upper hand and the "journey" ends in a tragic fiasco.

Thus, towards the very end of the poem, Ch'ü Yüan depicts his soul gayly and happily enjoying the splendors of the heavens, when suddenly it looks down and catches a glimpse below of the State of Ch'u, the native land of Ch'ü Yüan. Drawn by a surging longing for home, the soul descends to the earth and goes back, dejected and depressed, to the body. As will be evident, what is implied by this symbolic expression is that the shamanized ego-consciousness can easily be deshamanized.

> Enough! No wise men there are in the country to understand me.
> No use thinking of my homeland
> Since none is there to work with me for bettering the government.
> Let me rather tread the track of P'êng Hsien and join him in his
> eternal abode.

These are the words Ch'ü Yüan utters as his wandering soul comes

back to his body. And with these words the poem comes to an end. P'êng Hsien mentioned in the last verse is the name of an ancient legendary shaman who is said to have drowned himself in a river. Ch'ü Yüan, in fact, committed suicide by jumping into the river, holding a heavy stone in his arms.

As I said earlier, there is in the "Elegies of Ch'u" another long poem, *Yüan Yu* "Wandering into Far-off Countries" by a shaman-poet describing also a "celestial journey." Having exactly the same theme, similar in imagery and similar in formal composition, the two poems differ from one another in a very significant way. The difference consists in that *Yüan Yu* is fundamentally a work bearing a marked imprint of Taoism. Perfectly shamanistic in form but undeniably Taoistic in its underlying philosophy, it may be characterized as a shamanistic self-expression of Taoist spirituality.

The most remarkable feature of the shamanism of this poem — if shamanism it is — is that the "imaginal" world which it depicts is totally clean of the atmosphere of tragic feeling. Here the disembodied soul encounters no setbacks as it does in *Li Sao* in its "celestial journey." Everything, in fact, goes well. And at the end of the poem, the shaman, instead of being dragged back to his earthly existence, ascends still higher and attains to such a stage of spiritual perfection as is unthinkable in pure shamanism. As the poet himself proudly declares:

> Downward, in the bottomless depths
> The earth is out of sight
> Upward, in the limitless expanse of the Void,
> The heaven is out of sight.
> .....
> I am now standing in close proximity to
> The Primordial Origin of all things.

Those who are acquainted with classical Taoism will immediately notice that this is precisely an "imaginal" picture of the world of a Chuang-tzŭ. The "Primordial Origin of all things" (*t'ai ch'u*), to begin with, is an authentic technical term of Taoism, meaning the

Non-Being as the ultimate metaphysical reality of Being. "In the *t'ai ch'u* there is Nothing; there is no Being, there is no Name. It is that from which the metaphysical One emerges. The One is there, but it is not yet manifest" — so says a Taoist philosopher (in the *Book of Chuang-tzŭ*, XII).

The shaman, then, who is standing now in close proximity to the *t'ai ch'u* is no longer a pure shaman. He is being transfigured into a Taoist sage, the "true man" of Taoism.

It is of particular significance for the purposes of the present paper that even at the height of the metaphysical reality of Being, the True Man can enjoy a "celestial journey." The True Man, in other words, can visualize or "imaginalize" his metaphysical experience of the pre-phenomenal reality of Being in the mythopoeic form of a "celestial journey." In order, however, to have a glimpse into the secret of this kind of mythopoeic-metaphysical experience, we have to go beyond the horizon of the Ch'u shamanism and step into the world of authentic Taoism. Thus we turn from the "Elegies of Ch'u" to the "Book of Chuang-tzŭ."

Opening the pages of the "Book of Chuang-tzŭ," we encounter at the very outset a most impressive symbolic-mythopoeic description of a Taoist "celestial journey." Unlike the Ch'u shaman who by his "ascension" to heaven simply wants to enjoy wandering about among the images of alluring beauty in the world of shamanistic *mythopoesis*, the Taoist intends directly to go up to the "Primordial Origin of all things." His heavenly "ascension" definitely has a metaphysical aim, namely, to attain to the metaphysical state of non-Being of which Lao-tzŭ speaks as the pre-ontological state of absolute Undifferentiation before it is articulated out into myriads of things, i.e., the *Tao* in its ultimate reality. His sole intention is to attain to that dimension of *Tao*, get identified with it, and, looking back from that position, enjoy from above the view of the empirical world as it spreads itself out under him. Such, briefly stated, is the nature and structure of the Taoist "celestial journey."

With these preliminary remarks in mind let us see how Chuang-tzŭ himself describes mythopoeically his own experience of "celestial journey," or "free wandering in the Beginning of all things" as he calls it.

> In the dark mysterious Ocean of the North — so Chuang-tzŭ begins — there once lived a Fish whose name was K'un. Its size was so huge that nobody knew how many thousand miles it really was.
> This Fish has transmuted itself into a Bird whose name is now P'êng.
> The back of P'êng is so large that nobody knows how many thousand miles it really is.
> Now the Bird suddenly pulls itself together and flies off. Lo, its wings are like huge clouds hanging in the sky. Taking advantage of the raging storm of wind that cause the turbulence of the sea, the Bird intends to journey towards the dark mysterious Ocean of the South. The southern Ocean is the Lake of Heaven.
> As Ch'i Hsieh (a fictitious person whose name literally means something like Cosmic Harmony), the famous recorder of strange events and unusual things, relates: "When P'êng sets off for the dark mysterious Ocean of the South, it begins by beating with its wings the surface of the water for three thousand miles. Then up it goes on a whirlwind to the height of ninety thousand miles. Then it continues flying for six months before it takes a rest.

Now the Bird P'êng is in the sky. From the vertiginous height to which it has soared up, the giant Bird during its flight, which is, needless to say, an "imaginal"-metaphysical flight, looks down upon our earth, i.e., our empirical world, the world of ontological differentiation emerging out of the bosom of the undifferentiated One, the "Primordial Origin of all things." The ontological Many and the metaphysical One — the cosmic Bird looks at the former from the viewpoint of the latter. How does it appear to its eyes? To this question Chuang-tzŭ answers by bringing out the sharp contrast between the view of the empirical world as we, the earthly beings, perceive it and the view of the same empirical world as the Bird looks at it from above. In the hazy distance the world of Being appears, of course, totally transfigured. The distance separating the Bird from our

empirical reality symbolically represents the fundamental difference between the pre-phenomenal, metaphysical aspect of Reality and the phenomenal forms in which it appears in our ordinary cognitive experience of Being.

The empirical world as it appears in our "worldly," day-to-day experience is, Chuang-tzŭ remarks, an extremely "dirty" place with all kinds of material interests and sordid desires bubbling and foaming in a whirlpool of human relations. The whole landscape is thickly covered with an infernal atmosphere. It contrasts strikingly with the eternal serenity of the sky above. But the blue sky is precisely the space in which the Bird is now enjoying its "imaginal" journey. Let us continue our quotation from Chuang-tzŭ:

> (Just cast a glance upon the world we are living in. What do you see there?) The air shimmering with heat; dust and dirt flying about; the living beings blowing fetid breaths upon one another.
> The sky above, on the contrary, is an immense expanse of deep blue. Is this azure the real color of the sky? Or does the sky look so beautifully blue because it is at such a distance from us? (Yes it must be the distance that makes the sky look so blue.) So if the Bird now looks down from that height, it will see our world as something no less blue as the sky.

Just as the sky is blue to us human beings on the earth, the earth will simply be blue to the Bird flying in the sky. The symbolic meaning of this will be clear. Chuang-tzŭ is here trying to present an "imaginal" picture of the ontological Chaos which he came to know through a strikingly impressive experience — an ecstatic experience in which the "dirty" world of ours appeared completely transfigured into something indescribably serene and beautiful. It is a vision of Being produced by the empirical Many at a certain ontological level where all the various and variegated things in the empirical world are just about to merge into the "blue" expanse of the metaphysical One in which they, getting rid of their mutual essential distinctions, are to be unified with one another, thus going back to their "Primordial Origin."

Such is the "celestial journey" of the Taoist sage. The most

remarkable difference between him and the above-described Ch'u shaman lies in the total absence of tragic sense in the "imaginal" experience of the Taoist sage, whereas, as we saw above, the Ch'u shaman in his "imaginal" journey, is a hero of an existential tragedy. The "celestial journey" of the Ch'u shaman is tragic because he has to come back again to the miseries of the empirical world. For the Taoist, on the contrary, there is no "return" from the "journey." He has no place to return to. Physically, of course, he, too, comes back from the "journey" to the empirical world, but the empirical world to which he comes back is just the same spiritual world in which he has been during the "journey." The metaphysical experience of the "Primordial Origin of all things" has completely transformed his view of the empirical world. And such a metaphysically transformed world *is* his "ordinary" world. It is, as Chuang-tzŭ himself has called it, a "Village of There-Is-Absolutely-Nothing" (*wu ho yu chih hsiang*). For a man like him, existence in the empirical world is pure play, a "free wandering" among the things. Daily life is itself a "celestial journey."

Properly or originally a typical form of shamanistic spirituality, the "celestial journey," as an "imaginal" experience of the human psyche, is a universal phenomenon. It is a universal, ever-recurring theme of literature, mysticism and religion, manifesting itself with wide variations in the history of divergent cultures all over the world. It is met with even in religious traditions not usually associated with shamanism such as Islam. I am thinking in particular of the famous "Heavenly Ascension" (*mi'rāj*) of an outstanding Persian Ṣūfī of the 9th century, Bāyazīd Basṭāmī, which is indeed an extremely interesting case of a "celestial journey." Basṭāmī's "celestial journey" is no less metaphysical- "imaginal" than that of Chuang-tzŭ we have just studied, but remarkably different from it in both form and content, being as it is a spiritual phenomenon occurring within the context of strict Islamic monotheism. For lack of time and space I must refrain from dealing with the problem now.

IZUTSU'S CREATIVE "READING" OF ORIENTAL THOUGHT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Toshihiko Izutsu and the Eranos Conference

The twelve papers compiled in this two-volume work comprise lectures delivered in Switzerland by Toshihiko Izutsu (1914-93) at the annual Eranos Conference held in late summer on the shore of Lake Maggiore. The conference was conceived as "a meeting place for East and West" by Olga Froebe-Kapteyn (1881-1962), who was born of Dutch parents in London. It was founded by her in 1933 and was named *Eranos* at the suggestion of Rudolf Otto, a historian of religions best known for his influential book *Das Heilige*.[1]

Prominent among the lecturers at the Eranos conference were the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, the historian of religions Mircea Eliade, the biologist Adolf Portmann, the Islamicist Henry Corbin, a scholar of Judaic mysticism, Gershom Scholem, and the psychologist James Hillman. From their individual academic perspectives, they lectured on various religious manifestations in both the East and West. In 1967, Toshihiko Izutsu was selected as a main lecturer of the conference. From then until 1982, hardly a year passed without a lecture from him on Oriental philosophy. This two-volume work contains his collected lectures at the Eranos Conference, as published in the *Eranos Jahrbuch*.

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[1] For the origin of the Eranos Conference, see Rudolf Ritsema, "The Origins and Opus of Eranos: Reflections at the 55th Conference," *Eranos Jahrbuch*, vol. 56 /1987, Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag.

Izutsu was familiar not only with such Semitic thought as represented by Judaism and Islam, but also a wide range of Oriental philosophy, including the thought of Hindus, Buddhists, and Chinese and Japanese thinkers. He was at home in many languages of the East and West. His lectures at the Eranos Conference developed his creative "reading" of classic texts of Oriental thought. He focused mainly on Indian, Chinese, and Zen Buddhist thought, and strove to elucidate the structure of an "Oriental Philosophy" concerned with manifold layers of being and consciousness. Writing of the period of his participation in the Eranos Conference, he said:

> These twenty years happened to be the time I began giving my heart to the East and sought to "read" Oriental thought from my own point of view. I began to hope (or aspire?) to bring the traditions of Oriental philosophy into an intellectual actuality in the modern world.[2]

In his youth, Izutsu was attracted more by the West than by the East. Although his main focus was upon Islamic thought, he studied Western literature and philosophy. But after he began participating in the Eranos Conference, he gradually came to feel that the "root" of his existence was located in the East and that he should pay greater attention to Oriental thought. Through his long participation in Eranos, he had hoped to make the traditions of Oriental philosophy more broadly available in the contemporary international exchange of ideas. He was indeed engaged in a grand philosophical attempt to take "future-oriented" viewpoints in order to integrate Oriental traditions of thought into an organic unity, which might be called "Oriental philosophy."

Among the various themes which Izutsu chose to discuss in his twelve lectures were: Zen Buddhist thought, the ontological theories of Mādhyamika and Hua Yen thought, the theory of consciousness in Yogācāra, Vedānta philosophy, Taoist thought, such Confucian

[2] Toshihiko Izutsu, *Kosumosu to Anchikosumosu—Tōyō-tetsugaku no tameni* [Cosmos and Anti-cosmos: Toward an Oriental Philosophy], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1989, p. 3.

topics as Chu-tzŭ and *I Ching*, and the shamanistic thought of the *Elegies of Ch'u* (*Ch'u Tz'ŭ*). It is noteworthy that of his twelve Eranos lectures, the first four (1969, 1970, 1972, 1973) dealt with Zen Buddhist thought and that he returned to this topic in 1978. At the 1969 conference (conference theme : *Sinn und Wandlungen des Menschenbildes*) he lectured on "The Structure of Selfhood in Zen Buddhism." In the 1970 conference (conference theme: *Man and Speech*), he spoke on "Sense and Nonsense in Zen Buddhism." In 1972 (in a conference dealing with *The Realms of Colour*), he discussed "The Elimination of Color in Far Eastern Art and Philosophy." In 1973 (conference theme : *Correspondences in Man and World*) he spoke about "The Interior and Exterior in Zen Buddhism." In 1978 (conference theme: *In Time and Out of Time*), he spoke on "The Field Structure of Time in Zen Buddhism." Even those lectures which did not deal specifically with Zen Buddhist thought dealt with some aspects of Oriental thought in their relationship with Zen Buddhism. For example, at the 1979 Conference he lectured on "Between Image and No-Image: Far Eastern Ways of Thinking." His 1979 lecture, while not specifically focusing on Zen Buddhist thought, discusses aspects of it in the context of *I Ching*, Lao-tzŭ, and Chuang-tzŭ.

Izutsu's Creative "Reading" of Oriental Thought

As Izutsu himself mentions in his essay "Reminiscences of Ascona" at the end of the first volume, his invitation to the Eranos Conference was accompanied by the organizer's request to clarify Zen Buddhist thought. About ten years before Izutsu's own invitation, Daisetsu Suzuki (1870-1966), famous for his study of Zen, had been twice invited to speak about Zen Buddhist thought at the Eranos Conference. At the 1953 conference (conference theme: *Mensch und Erde*), Suzuki lectured on "The Role of Nature in ZEN Buddhism." In 1954 (conference theme: *Mensch und Wandlung*), Suzuki spoke about "The Awakening of a New Consciousness in Zen." Suzuki's audience at the conference was deeply impressed by Zen Buddhist thought, but it was also mystified by his presentation, which the

listeners reportedly "hardly understood, as though they were overwhelmed by smoke." They were said to have "felt that there was, or should be, something deep in his lecture, although they could not understand it." It is thus hardly surprising that the Eranos organizer's invitation to Izutsu to lecture on Zen thought was accompanied by a "request to clarify it in some way."[3]

At the time Izutsu was invited to the Eranos Conference, interest in Zen Buddhist thought had markedly increased. Izutsu found that there was a certain interesting change of cultural paradigms in the East and West. In this regard, Izutsu says:

> About thirty years ago, when I left Japan to conduct research projects in foreign universities, I found that many intellectuals took great interest in the Zen Buddhist standpoint towards human subjectivity. They had all read the works of Daisetsu Suzuki. Regardless of how they understood the Zen standpoint, these people were groping in a new direction after a wholly new approach to the reality of "self." They were abandoning a train of thought that was directly oriented toward theoretical conflicts deriving from the mirror relationship of two subjective entities, called God and man. Whether it is destructive or constructive, this new direction is clearly a development of so-called post-modernism. This interest was especially prominent among the audience of the Eranos Conference in 1969. I had to explain the Zen Buddhist views of "self" to people who were strongly interested in the unique Zen way of grasping the "self," or, at least, to their vigorous intellectual curiosities.[4]

Izutsu's emphasis on Zen Buddhist thought in his Eranos lectures was surely determined not only by the organizer's request; it was, more profoundly, a response to his perception of divergent cultural paradigms in the East and West. He believed Zen Buddhist thought to contain a fresh, spiritually creative power and to be a fundamental

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 340.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 350-351.

form of thought. Through both his own subjective experience and philosophical analysis, he became convinced that this thought had infinite possibilities for spiritual creation. Izutsu's papers on Zen Buddhist thought, which include his four papers of the Eranos lecture given in 1969, 1970, 1972, and 1973, were published as a book in 1977 by the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, Tehran, under the title *Toward a Philosophy of Zen Buddhism*.

The grand edifice of the "Oriental philosophy" Izutsu sought to construct gradually took shape in his lectures at the Eranos Conference. He semantically developed his creative "reading" of the classical texts of Oriental thought. Needless to say, he dealt not only with Zen Buddhist texts but also with other traditional exemplars of Oriental thought. For instance, he devoted three successive lectures from 1974-1976 to Confucian metaphysics: "The Temporal and A-temporal Dimensions of Reality in Confucian Metaphysics" (conference theme: *Norms in a Changing World*), "Naive Realism and Confucian Philosophy" (conference theme: *The Variety of Worlds*), "The *I Ching* Mandala and Confucian Metaphysics" (conference theme: *Oneness and Variety*). It was in his discussion of the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, that he especially focused on classical texts of Confucian thought. With its eight trigrams and the sixty-four hexagrams formed by combining them, the *I Ching*, one of the Five Classics of Confucianism, offers all the possible situations or permutations of creation, a universe in miniature. Pointing out that this universe is represented in the space called "the *I Ching* Mandala," he strove in his Eranos lectures to clarify its nature and structure.

In the 1980 conference (conference theme: *Extremes and Borders*), Izutsu went on to lecture on the structure of Hua Yen thought in comparison with the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. The title of his lecture was "The Nexus of Ontological Events: A Buddhist View of Reality." According to Hua Yen philosophy, as described in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, in a world of empirical multiplicity, elements that are definitely distinguished from one another and stand opposed to one another are called "things" (*shih* 事). But in the domain of absolute

metaphysical reality (*li* 理), all phenomenal things lose their essential distinctions and are reduced to nothingness. In the domain of the "interpenetration of *li* and *shih*" (理事無礙), each of the manifold things in the empirical world embodies the one absolute metaphysical reality totally and perfectly. According to Izutsu, the ontological climax of Hua Yen philosophy is the "interpenetration of *shih* and *shih*" (事事無礙), which means "the mutual ontological penetration of everything into everything else in the empirical dimension of experience." This climax is properly understandable only on the basis of the "interpenetration of *li* and *shih*." His 1980 Eranos lecture beautifully clarifies the ontological structure of Hua Yen philosophy.

Izutsu's 1982 Eranos lecture presented the thought of the *Elegies of Ch'u* (*Ch'u Tz'ŭ*), a remarkable shamanistic literature in China, in comparison with Zen and *Chuang-tzŭ*. His lecture, "Celestial Journey: Mythopoesis and Metaphysics," was delivered at a conference devoted to "The Play of Gods and Men." From his study of the *Elegies of Ch'u*, he observes the spiritual experience of a "celestial journey" in ancient China is typically a shamanistic phenomenon and he clarified the inner structure of shamanistic spirituality as an "imaginal" experience of the human psyche.

Toward the Construction of "Oriental Philosophy"

With his conviction that classical Oriental texts present capabilities of thought which could serve to stimulate and enrich certain types of modern thought, Izutsu attempted to construct what he called "Oriental philosophy." In other words, from his "reading" of classical texts as the heritage of a broadly based Oriental thought, he sought to develop "Oriental philosophy" as the foundation of creative philosophical reflection.

As Izutsu often emphasized, one could view Western philosophy as the self-development of an organic unity. In Oriental thought, by contrast, we cannot find "a unity as a whole or an organic structure; it has no coherence juxtaposed with Western philosophy as a whole, although it could be possible to find it partly or fragmentally."[5] On

the basis of this understanding of Oriental thought, he elaborated his plan of the "synchronical structuralization" (共時的構造化 *kyōjiteki-kōzōka*) of Oriental thought. In regard to the so-called "synchronical structuralization," he maintains:

> This manipulation begins with transposing the main philosophical traditions of the Orient spatially into an ideal plane at the present point. In other words, it is an attempt to create artificially an organic space of thought, which could include all these traditions structurally, by taking off the philosophical traditions of the Orient from the axis of time and by recombining them paradigmatically.[6]

The universe of thought arising from such a theoretical manipulation is determined by its multi-polar and multi-layered structure. Through structural analysis, Izutsu attempted to extract fundamental patterns of Oriental philosophical reflection and to construct "Oriental philosophy" semantically on the basis of fundamental patterns. In his view, the original function of language is semantic articulation, which discriminates beings through meaning. He argues that the word "articulation" is almost synonymous to the Buddhist term *vikalpa*, or discrimination. By articulating or discriminating objects semantically, a word can function by denoting a meaning. All things and events in the ordinary empirical world, including ourselves, are, when properly viewed, merely meaningful units of being that come into existence through the semantic articulation by language. This fundamental condition for the appearance of beings is, in Izutsu's terminology, called "semantic articulation, that is, ontological articulation" (意味分節・即・存在分節). Moreover, Izutsu regarded the theory of semantic articulation by language as "the essence of Oriental philosophy or, at least, one of its main currents."[7]

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[5] Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ishiki to Honshitsu* [Consciousness and Essence], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1983, p. 428.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 429.

[7] Cf. Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ishiki no Keijijōgaku* [The Metaphysics of Consciousness], Tokyo: Chūō-kōronsha, 1993.

It goes without saying that Izutsu's analysis aimed not merely at the philological study of the traditions of Oriental thought but, much more ambitiously, at developing a new philosophical way of thinking, determined by the magnetic field of Oriental philosophy, and achieved by internalizing its traditions into his own consciousness. Izutsu's Eranos lectures on Oriental thought served gradually to reinforce his own consciousness of the uniqueness of his system of "Oriental philosophy."

Oriental philosophical thought is, in Izutsu's view, characterized by Oriental philosophers' peculiar ability to see things and events as undetermined by the ontological limits which condition their existence in the ordinary world of experiences. Oriental philosophers, he thinks, have realized the significance of viewing things and events with so-called "compound eyes," for they have learned to see things and events both at the dimensions determined by ontological boundaries and at a dimension completely free from all determination. In such a state of consciousness, the "many" (多) correspond to the "one" (一), while they are still "many"; "being" (有) is "nothingness" (無), while it is still "being." In other words, one could see "being" only at the superficial level of existence and "nothingness" at its deep level. According to Lao-tzŭ, the unarticulated state of being, preceding every semantic articulation of "being," is called the "nameless" (無名), which is the state before the appearance of the "named" (有名). It is just such an ontological situation that Chuang-tzŭ intended to represent with the word *hun tun* (渾沌 chaos).

According to Zen Buddhist thought, if one can be conscious of a state of affairs in which the innumerable discriminated states of being are immediately transformed into the space of non-discrimination, such a situation is called "nothingness" (無). This "nothingness" means the state of experience, which arises through the extraordinary state of meditation, that is, a state of being prior to an articulation of consciousness and existence. "Nothingness" in Zen Buddhist thought corresponds to the *li* of Hua Yen philosophy, and also to the

"emptiness" (*śūnyatā*) of Mādhyamika thought. In this way, Izutsu attempted to find the essential structure underlying the traditional thought of the Orient.

Moreover, what Izutsu emphasized as an important characteristic of Oriental philosophy in general is that Oriental philosophers open the dimension of depth-consciousness as their own experiential facts and, from such a horizon, can see the multi-layered structure of reality. According to Izutsu, there exists a one-to-one correspondence of the manifold layers of objective reality with those of subjective consciousness; surface-consciousness can see the superficial dimension of reality alone, while depth-consciousness can view the depth of reality. Izutsu thus developed a structural theory of "Oriental philosophy" characterized by the multi-layered correlations of human consciousness with reality.

As mentioned above, Izutsu's Eranos lectures served gradually to elaborate and develop his perspective on "Oriental philosophy." His twelve Eranos lectures printed in this two-volume work offer its readers an introduction to the "Oriental philosophy" into which he put his whole heart.

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The Structure of Oriental Philosophy:
Collected Papers of the Eranos Conference
Vol. II

2008年6月10日　初版第1刷発行

著　者――井筒俊彦
発行者――坂上　弘
発行所――慶應義塾大学出版会株式会社
〒108-8346　東京都港区三田2-19-30
TEL〔編集部〕03-3451-0931
〔営業部〕03-3451-3584〈ご注文〉
〔　〃　〕03-3451-6926
FAX〔営業部〕03-3451-3122
振替　00190-8-155497
http://www.keio-up.co.jp/
ブックデザイン――宮川なつみ
表紙・扉題字「無」：井筒俊彦
印刷・製本――精興社

©2008 Toyoko Izutsu
Printed in Japan　ISBN 978-4-7664-1431-8